A note on Arabic transliteration: I have followed a usage common in general surveys on Middle East issues, preserving the original orthography present in quotations.

University of Alberta

Music in the Study of Identity: A Look at the Egyptian Diaspora in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

by

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requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the dominant processes that inform and reflect immigrant identity as well as to challenge the dominant consensus in music studies concerning music and identity, which posits music as the most potent and common means of forming and articulating identity. I accomplish both by means of describing and framing series of interviews I conducted with Egyptian immigrants in Edmonton between years 2001 and 2003 and by drawing on historical, scholarly and literary sources that explore diasporic experience.

I argue that examined through the prism of the Egyptian immigrant experience, music and its sensory associations constitute merely a component of the immigrant experience, not its most vital and revealing medium.

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Chapter One

Introduction: thesis, aim, methodology, and theoretical context.

My aim in this study is to demonstrate that the immigrant identity is a process that is largely influenced by individual and social determinations that fall outside the purview of ethnomusicological inquiry and range from language and memory to food and utilitarian objects. I will do so by presenting the information gleaned from the interviews I conducted with six Egyptian immigrants and contextualizing that information by introducing examples of diasporic experience drawn from historical, scholarly and literary sources.

1.1. Thesis Parameters, Main Issues and Objectives

When I began my fieldwork on identity among Egyptian immigrants of Edmonton, I did so with an expectation that music would form a significant, if not pivotal, ingredient of their identity across the board. During the course of my research, however, it became apparent that music was not the most effective conduit of individual identity but, instead, constituted merely one of the many ways of self-representation. I found that music's significance in informing and conveying diasporic identities varied greatly and was intertwined with other processes and activities, such as language or memory. Music in this picture did sometimes indeed carry the force normally attributed to it by ethnomusicologists. At other times, however, it seemed peripheral or, perhaps more interestingly, found its presumed force transcribed into other forms (such as, in the case of my Egyptian interviewees, literature, poetry, souvenirs and utilitarian objects associated with the old country and social rituals). The purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to explore the dominant processes that inform and reflect immigrant identity, highlighting the role of those that fall beyond the scope of ethnomusicological inquiry. I will do so by means of describing and framing the interviews I conducted with six Egyptian immigrants between 2001 and 2003. By presenting these interviews I hope to provide insight into immigrant identity as a more nuanced and heterogeneous process largely influenced by individual and social determinations that are usually not investigated by music scholars. To further illuminate the concepts and substantiate the claims addressed in my thesis, I will draw on literature which explores diasporic experience, ranging from Svetlana Boym's cultural critique of nostalgia to autobiographical accounts of Joseph Brodsky's imagined homeland, Marcel Proust's internal exile, and Czeslaw Miłosz's lingering childhood ghosts.

The first chapter acquaints the reader with my research: what motivated it, its purpose, and its findings. Here, I state my thesis, outline my research objectives, and present my methodology. I present a synoptic overview of each chapter. The literature review aims at synthesizing some dominant discursive threads within the field of music and identity, which my research supplements, and, on occasion, contradicts. I present views of those scholars who consider music a powerful society-shaping force, and one of the clearest, most revealing lenses through which individuals construct and express their identity. I then problematize those views by briefly focusing on the case studies of the six members of Edmonton's Egyptian community. Here, I present the data from my fieldwork, which suggests that music is but one of many means of immigrant self-representation, and in the case of those Egyptians I interviewed, not the most significant one at all.

In the second chapter I lay out the context of Edmonton, and talk about its ethnic make-up. Particular emphasis is placed on the local Egyptian diaspora and its uniqueness among the rest of the Middle Eastern and other ethnic groups. An overview of the history of Arab and Egyptian migration into Canada helps to situate the Egyptian identity in the historical and global context.

Chapter three offers an overview of the Egyptian music in the twentieth century.

Chapters four and five introduce case studies of first- and second-generation Egyptian immigrants, respectively. Through these case studies, supported by selected multidisciplinary scholarly and literary sources, I examine the phenomenon of the Egyptian immigrant experience and its constituents. I also explore the concept of identity, by focusing on the ways in which it is consciously and subconsciously constructed and manifested in diaspora. Juxtaposing historical fact with personal accounts, I aim to provide a sketch of the fluid, complex concept of diasporic identity.

A concluding chapter encapsulates the ideas examined in the thesis.

Throughout my thesis, I use the terms "diaspora," "immigrant," and "exile," to describe a single event, condition, or person. Although each one has a distinct definition, the characteristics they share aptly illustrate the complex situations and individuals discussed here. The term "Diaspora" is a synonym for "the dispersion of the Jews outside of Israel from the sixth century B.C. when the Jews were exiled to Babylonia, until the present time," though it is also used (using the lower-case 'd') to describe "the body of Jews and Jewish communities outside Palestine or modern Israel." More generally, the term "diaspora" is also used to mean "the dispersion of an originally homogenous people" from their traditional homeland.[1] In my work, I use "diaspora" to denote a group of people of the same nationality or national ancestry (Egyptian) living in a foreign country. "Immigrant," according to The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, is "a person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another."[2] An "exile" is defined as "one who lives away from one's native country, whether because of expulsion or voluntary absence." The term "exile" also refers to a phenomenon of an "enforced removal from one's native country" as well as a "self-imposed absence from one's country,"[3] albeit in popular usage, "exile" more frequently connotes the former. In my work, I intentionally refrained from defining the term simply because of the multitude of meanings contained within each explication. "Enforced" emigration may be a result of a direct government-sponsored expulsion just as it may be motivated by the absence of economic prospects or racial, religious or ethnic discrimination in the home country. The dire living and working circumstances and absence of viable alternatives often all but 'force' one to emigrate.

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[1] All definitions gleaned from *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992. For a scholarly explication of the concept of diaspora, see Kim D. Butler's article "Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10 (2001), 189-220.

[2] Ibid. s.v. "Immigrant."

[3] Ibid. s.v. "Exile."

1.2. Methodology

My methodology weaves autobiographical accounts of my Egyptian interviewees with the examination of scholarly and literary written sources; storytelling and critical reflection illuminate each other. My preliminary review of scholarly materials in the area of music and identity led me to conclude that music possessed a unique ability to absorb and articulate individual and collective identities. I elected, therefore, to examine the process of identity through the lens of music. My participant observation among Polish, Hungarian, Slovakian, Indian, Italian, Irish and Egyptian immigrant communities and informal communication with many individuals of various other backgrounds impressed on me the important role music played in preserving the cultural identity of a diaspora. In communities of new immigrants music provided a bond of common heritage, and strengthened a sense of individual identity that empowered in their efforts to assimilate. Diaspora members who have integrated into the social fabric of the society continued to carefully cultivate their cultural heritage as an assertion of their unique and separate identity from the one they have constructed (or have been invested with) as members of the mass society.

While the role of music in fostering identity served as a starting point for my research, I did not dismiss the possibility of other means of self-representation emerging as dominant. Once my interviewees' narratives revealed the threads significant to them, I would pursue those. The initial set of questions I posed to my interviewees was rather diverse, though music was its leitmotif:

- "What music do you listen to?"
- "What role does this music/these genres play in your life? What do they say about you?"
- "Is music your tool for self-expression? If so, what do particular elements of it express?"
- "In what way, if any, does it assist you in expressing, asserting your identity? And how would you define this identity?"
- "How do you express your Egyptianness? Does it differ from your expressions of your Canadianness?,"
- "Is your identity tied to your Egyptianness, your Arab heritage, or your Canadian nationality?," "Are they parallel identities, or one composite identity? Are they in conflict, or are they in equilibrium? Are they separate threads of your identity, or are they a continuum?"

During the course of our conversations, I observed the focus shift from music and collective cultural activity generally to poetry, literature, and everyday objects and rituals (books, collecting souvenirs, cooking, reminiscing). The questions changed accordingly. I began asking my interviewees *what* means they adopted in asserting their identity. I asked what role memory and nostalgia played in their lives, and if either acquired new significance in exile. I inquired what symbols, material or immaterial, they used in order to remember or forget their past, and what significance their pre-immigrant past carried in exile. The thread of the narrative determined the flow of each conversation.

The differences in the ways I conducted interviews are reflected in the text. Generally, during the initial interview (whenever there was more than one), I abstained from using recording devices, fearing that they may alienate the interviewee or put him/her ill at ease. I sought to establish a comfortable rapport before (if at all) introducing the potentially disruptive medium of a recording device. Having met with Helmy several times, I felt sufficiently comfortable at a certain point to propose that we record the session. Fikry and I made rather elaborate plans to meet; fearing that I may not have a chance to see him again, I ventured a request to record our conversation. He steadfastly refused. During the course of our interview, I was dazzled by his intellect, his acerbic wit, and impressed by his audacity and regretted that I did not have our conversation recorded (so many verbal gems vanished into the ether!). I have only interviewed Magda Salama and Gamal Abdel Shehid once, as well. I did not record my interview with the former, but I did record my conversation with the latter. Though I spoke informally with both Mohamed and Marwa Salama on many occasions, I only interviewed them once, without recording the session.

During the course of my work with my Egyptian informants, I discovered that identity could be an enormously elastic and abundant entity whose diverse aspects (or one's multiple selves) became salient in different social contexts. I also discovered that using (or merely acknowledging the existence of) music as an ingredient and means of articulating identity was a matter of individual constitution and choice.

I was interested in how individuals compartmentalized the multiple facets of their identities, and how they negotiated and defined them. I wanted to know what informed the narrative patterns around which individuals, consciously or subconsciously, structured their lives, and what means they employed to transform, refine, and articulate them. My interest in the evolution of immigrant identity and my affinity toward the Egyptian culture and history compelled me to examine these problems in the context of the diasporic experience generally and the Egyptian example specifically. My own status as an immigrant has undoubtedly, for better or for worse, influenced the research process, facilitating personal encounters, and rendering me attuned to the nuances of the immigrant experience.

Aspiring to produce a cohesive and balanced study, I strove to maintain the equilibrium of fact and critical reflection, fusing historical accounts and statistical information with ethnographic interview data. My overarching aim, however, was to create an intensely humane portrait of the immigrant experience. Guided by the individuals' auto-biographies and *their* interpretation of history, I only incorporated information gleaned from secondary sources to the extent that it enhanced and contextualized the subjective thread of the narrative. History, after all, is always someone else's story about someone else's experiences, a chronicle of observable phenomena filtered by the lens of historian's subjectivity. Therefore, my attempt at equilibrium should not be confused with an attempt at objectivity.

Intent on preserving the integrity of the stories narrated to me and on emphasizing the multifaceted, abundant nature of identity, I often relied on my interviewees' self-reflection. My own analysis served as a cohesive agent and a facilitating medium, and I think that in conjunction with the academic analysis and the interview data, it has only enriched this study. Bruno Nettl's dictum, "[n]eedless to say, in all approaches, objectivity, avoidance of value judgements based on the investigator's own cultural background and acceptance of music as part of cultures are essential,"[4] had gone partly unheeded.

Identity is a complex process founded on individual and collective narratives. The latter may include ethnic, national, and global strands, and within those, cultural (custom, ritual and religion), socio-economic, and political substrata, but the way they will be perceived, experienced, and articulated, depends on the prism of individual disposition and experience. The challenge of quantifying that realm and of demarcating the boundary between the sense and reason, between the essential (consciousness) and the acquired (socialization) has largely motivated my inquiry into the ways individuals formed and asserted their identity. Marx's and Engels's materialist conception of history helped to crystallize some of my ideas regarding the nature of agency.[5]

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[4] Bruno Nettl. *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*. (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 11.

In his 1859 Preface to *The Critique of Political Economy*, Marx wrote:

> The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual process in general. *It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness*.[6] [emphasis mine]

This seemingly unequivocal and dogmatic stance adopted by Marx was qualified by Engels who described history as a mosaic of wills and actions, not merely a unidirectional force of economic factors (albeit fundamental ones, as he conceded in the following quote).

> The economic situation is the basis, but the various components of the superstructure – political forms of the class struggle and its consequences, … juridical forms, and even the reflections of all these actual struggles in the minds of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas – also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their *form* in particular.[7]

Both thinkers postulated that while individuals do shape their own history, they do so within clearly delineated limits and under established conditions. Through my fieldwork, I tried to determine the degree to which that was true. Assuming that identity is a composite of subjective and the objective forces, I set out to establish the extent to which each influenced the formation of one's identity. An overview of Edmonton's ethnic make-up and a historical sketch of Arab and Egyptian immigration to Canada, provided in chapter two, helped to contextualize individual identity in the broader framework of local and global narratives. My interviewees' accounts offered a glimpse into the process of self-representation.

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[5] I want to extend a debt of gratitude to Professor Regula Qureshi, in whose class *Music and the Mode of Production* I first read Marx and became fascinated with the ideas of consciousness and social being.

[6] Excerpted from Marx's Preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* (1859), quoted in Derek Sayer, *Violence of Abstraction: The Analytic Foundations of Historical Materialism*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 1.

1.2.1. Case selection.

My sample of six individuals is small and fairly homogenous. They are of varying demographic but represent roughly the same social group. All belong to the urban intelligentsia: two are university professors, one a retired engineer, a library employee, and two are university students with postgraduate aspirations. They are all well-assimilated immigrants and seem, judging by their social position and professional status as well as by their own accounts, to have carved out their own comfortable space of belonging in Canada. Four were born in Egypt, and two were born in Canada. All are affiliated in some way with the University of Alberta -- they teach or study at that institution and/or and related or socially acquainted with the others – and were introduced to me by Iman Mersal and Michael Frishkopf who teach there.

My sample is not a microcosm of the Egyptian community at large and while many of its characteristics are consonant with the depictions of the Egyptian diaspora in

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[7] Quoted in Derek Sayer, *Violence of Abstraction: The Analytic Foundations of Historical Materialism*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 6.

academic studies[8], it is not my intention here to make assumptions about the entire community on the basis of six interviews. I would like to point out, however, that the studies of Egyptian diaspora of Montreal, Toronto, and Baltimore[9] emphasize the community's general homogeneity. According to the scholars, Egyptian immigration in Canada produced an echelon of highly educated intellectuals and professionals.[10] Many Egyptians who arrived into Canada already possessed the credentials and abilities required to facilitate their assimilation and ensure economic prosperity. Oftentimes, a formal invitation issued by the government or research institution was the only means of emigrating. Successive generations continued the "tradition." Those I interviewed and many I had met and knew indirectly had certainly belonged in that category. While I have not interviewed a sizeable segment of the community, I would deem it reasonable to apply Abu-Laban's and Keck's idea of Egyptian diasporic homogeneity to Edmonton's Egyptian community.

In this study, however, I prefer to steer clear of bold, sweeping assumptions. Some aspects of the diasporic tales narrated by my interviewees may constitute the recurring leitmotifs of the immigrant experience but others do not represent the majority of Egyptian diaspora, but rather individual cases. I am interested in immigrant identity, be it individual or collective, and ways in which it is informed and expressed and I think that this study accommodates those objectives. While I do not claim that the six cases I examine reflect the intricacies of the Egyptian diaspora of Edmonton, I do think that they illuminate some of its aspects and perhaps encourage further investigation.

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[8] Keck 1989, Abu-Laban 1980, McIrvin Abu-Laban 1989, Abu-Laban and Suleiman 1989, El-Hamamsy 1975, Skoggard 1998.

[9] Abu-Laban 1980 for Montreal and Toronto, Keck 1989 for Baltimore.

1.3. Theoretical state of the field of music and identity: literature review.

Predominant consensus among music scholars in ethnomusicology, musicology, music theory, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, among other fields, is that music forms a unique and often vital mechanism of identity. What accounts for music's privileged status in the study of identity? Music theorist Simon Frith attributes music's singularity to its ability to absorb and articulate individual and collective identities in the way that is similar to a canvas onto which a broad palette of sentiments can be projected. According to him, music possesses a "looseness of reference," and is, "because of its qualities of abstractness,…by nature, an individualizing form;"[11] a kind of an empty signifier used to represent a vast multitude of individual and collective sentiments. Frith calls music "a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective."[12] For Frith, as well as for many other scholars across disciplines, music's apparent innocuousness and textual ambiguity render it a more adaptable and, ultimately, a more persuasive medium of expression than, say, a written word. In repressive regimes, for

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[10] Information in the subsequent section is gleaned from Keck 1989, Abu-Laban 1980 and Skoggard 1998.

[11] Simon Frith, "Music and Identity," *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 121.

[12] Ibid, 110.

instance, music's ambiguity can simultaneously convey the state's official ideology and serve as a conduit of popular sentiment.

Social historian Jacques Attali conceptualizes music as both a harbinger and a reflection of the social, political, and economic dynamics of our society. Music, Attali writes, "reflects the manufacture of society, [...] constitutes the audible waveband of the vibrations and signs that make up society" and is "[a]n instrument of understanding, [prompting] us to decipher a sound form of knowledge."[13] In Attali's conception, music both shapes and reflects our world. "In noise can be read the codes of life, the relations among men," he writes, and adds that "all music, any organization of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality."[14]

In a similar vein, ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin argues that music not only "anchors individual memory and group consciousness,"[15] but also "helps to orchestrate personal, local, regional, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and national identity."[16] Music, then, not only articulates identity but also embodies it. In his article "Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach," Slobin ascribes to music "an odd quality that even passionate activities like gardening or dog-raising lack: the simultaneous projecting and dissolving of the self in *performance*."[17] According to ethnomusicologist Martin Stokes, music "evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity."[18] Both Stokes and Slobin underscore music's unique ability to absorb and articulate a vast range of individual and collective sentiments. Ethnomusicologist Sarah Cohen sees music as a potent socio-political force, "bound up with the struggle for power, prestige, and place," "used as a tool to transform notions of place and identity in order to maintain or challenge a particular hierarchical social order."[19]

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[13] Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music.* Trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 4.
[14] Ibid, 6.
[15] Mark Slobin, "Introduction," *Retuning Culture: Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe,* Ed. Mark Slobin (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 4.
[16] Ibid, 4.
[17] Mark Slobin, "Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach," *Ethnomusicology* 36 (1992), 25.

In her work on the role of music in the production of place, Sarah Cohen highlights centrality of music in everyday life, and "its role in the production of identity, belonging, and place," as well as in evoking and organizing memory.[20] Through the anthropological portrait of Jack Levy, a member of Liverpool's Jewish community, Cohen examines music's link with personal and historical memory, music's influence in upholding social relations (through listening, producing, exchanging, and ritual framing), and its role in creating and communicating a sense of real or imagined places. Her account illustrates "music's effectiveness in stimulating a sense of identity, in preserving and transmitting cultural memory, and in establishing the sensuous production of place."[21]

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[18] Martin Stokes, "Introduction," *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, Ed. Martin Stokes (Oxford/Providence: Berg Publishers, 1994), 3.

[19] Sara Cohen, "Sounding Out the City: Music and the Sensuous Production of Place," *The Place of Music*, Ed. Andrew Leyshon et al. (New York; London: The Guilford Press, 1998), 283.

[20] Ibid, 282-283. The idea of music's evocative power has been explored by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century. In his article, published in *Dictionary of Music*, Rousseau labels the effect of the cowbell sound in the Swiss countryside as a "memorative sign" rather than music, foregrounding the mediating role of sound. (Quoted in Boym 2001, 4)

[21] Ibid, 287.

Jocelyne Guilbault recognizes music's force in asserting national and ethnic boundaries in the face of globalization. According to her, music plays an important role in defining and preserving the elements of the "local" and in constructing a group's cultural identity.[22] In her study of *zouk* in the Caribbean (1993), she explores the metamorphosis of meaning. As the genre transcends geographical, demographic, and class boundaries, its significance and value transform. Music informs the narrative patterns around which we structure our lives as individuals, but its impact extends beyond the personal. The meanings generated by *zouk* in Martinique, for instance, differ from those in St. Lucia, and therefore likely from those in, say, France, where *zouk* may be marketed as "world music" thus acquiring a completely different significance.[23] Keith Negus argues that music and its related processes have a significant impact on the creation of identity. "A sense of identity," he writes, "is created out of and across the processes whereby people are connected together through and with music."[24]

Tia DeNora, in her study *Music in Everyday Life,* writes:

> [Music] does much more than convey signification through non-verbal means. At the level of daily life, music has power. It is implicated in every dimension of social agency... Music may influence how people compose their bodies, how they conduct themselves, how they experience the passage of time, how they feel-in terms of energy and emotion-about themselves, about others, and about situations.[25]

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[22] Jocelyne Guilbault. "On Redefining the 'local' through World Music." *The World of Music* 35 (1993), 33-47.

[23] Jocelyne Guilbault *Zouk: World Music in the West Indies.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[24] Keith Negus. *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction*. (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 133.

[25] Tia DeNora. *Music in Everyday Life.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16-17.

She calls music "a technology of self," and "cultural material *par excellence* of emotion and the personal."[26] Used as a resource for identity formation, music comes to the fore "as a device for the reflexive process of remembering/constructing who one is"[27] and as a means of communicating self to others. Evoking Proust, she calls music "a mediator of…the aesthetic, memory –encrusted unconscious."[28]

Thomas Turino, writing in 1999, states unequivocally: "If ethnomusicologists have come to agree on anything over the last decade it is that music is a key resource for realizing personal and collective identities which, in turn, are crucial for social, political, and economic participation."[29] Drawing on Peircian semiotic theory, Turino writes:

> [o]ne source for the affective power of musical indices [sign related to its object through simultaneous occurrence in actual experience, such as a sound of a plagal cadence evoking Catholic mass or a Soviet anthem serving as an index for Olympic ceremonies or, perhaps, communism, depending on one's experiences and perceptions] is the fact that they are able to condense a great quantities and varieties of meaning-even contradictory meanings-within a single sign.[30]

In his assessment, music can be both a medium for expression or the expression itself as it generates and mediates meaning, and allows for multiplicity of associations.

Examining the popularity of *technobanda* among the people of Mexican and Central American extraction in Los Angeles, Helena Simonett concludes that the reason for the genre's widespread appeal is its "power to engender strong community feelings" and its influence in "forg[ing] a cultural self-understanding" among the diaspora who live in "a politically adverse period in a rather unfriendly environment."[31] However, she also witnesses *technobanda*'s social significance transcribed across the ethnic and linguistic boundaries as it becomes co-opted by the mainstream audience. She underscores music's looseness of reference and plurality of generated meanings by observing that while the genre may retain meanings attributed to it by the Latino audience, it undoubtedly acquires new ones with its debut within the non-Latino community. Despite the genre's origins and intended audience, it "resonate[s] with…individuals on a personal basis,"[32] thus acquiring a new layer of significance.

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[26] Tia DeNora. *Music in Everyday Life.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 46.
[27] Ibid, 62.
[28] Ibid, 68.
[29] Thomas Turino. "Signs of Imagination, Identity, and Experience: A Peircian Semiotic Theory for Music." *Ethnomusicology* 43 (1999), 221.
[30] Ibid, 235.

Ricardo Trimillos explores the ways in which Filpino youths in the western United States establish and maintain their ethnic identity. Music, Trimillos demonstrates, plays a fundamental role in those processes. Supporting traditional music ensembles, reinterpreting traditional repertoire in the modern framework, incorporating traditional elements into contemporary music, and acting as "Filipino exponent[s] of Euro-American music" are just some of the strategies Filipinos use to foster and articulate their ethnic identity.[33]

Investigating the phenomenon of Albanian nationalism, Jane C. Sugarman focuses on the impact that the nationalist discourses, filtered through poetry and song, have had on "the constitution, maintenance, and transformation of social formations" in the last hundred years.[34] She examines "the extent to which elements [of nationalist] poetry have been absorbed into the song repertoire of the present-day Albanian rural community," eventually forging a new national sense of identity.[35] The assimilation of the nationalist poems, "the medium of the literate middle class," into the musically based rural lore, "the realm of oral practice," had a profound impact on the formation of a national form of subjectivity.[36]

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[31] Helena Simonett. "Popular Music and the Politics of Identity: The Empowering Sound of Technobanda." *Popular Music and Society* 24 (2000), 1.
[32] Ibid, 12.
[33] Ricardo D. Trimillos. "Music and Ethnic Identity: Strategies among Overseas Filipino Youth." *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 18 (1986), 9-11.

Reinforcing Sugarman's position, Slovenian ethnomusicologist Julijan Strainar observes that

> …folk song along with language, because of its formal elements and the contents attached to the given circumstances, makes the crucial link that preserves, stimulates and strengthens the individual sense of identity and collective sense of belonging to a nation.[37]

George Lipsitz, discussing popular culture, notes a symbiotic relationship between music and memory:

> Through music we learn about place and about displacement. Laments for lost places and narratives of exile and return often inform, inspire, and incite the production of popular music. Songs build engagement among audiences at least in part through references that tap memories and hopes about particular places."[38]

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[34] Jane C. Sugarman. "Imagining the Homeland: Poetry, Songs, and the Discourses of Albanian Nationalism." *Ethnomusicology* 43 (1999), 419.
[35] Ibid, 419-420.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Julijan Strajnar. "Folk Music and Identity." *Music and Minorities: Proceedings of the 1st International Meeting of the International Council for Traditional Music in Ljubljana, Slovenia June 25-30, 2000*. Eds. Svanibor Pettan et al., 95.
[38] George Lipsitz. *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place.* (London; New York: Verso, 1994), 4.

The picture that emerges from this overview is one of music's singular capacity to absorb, articulate and shape identities.

At this juncture, I deem it appropriate to distinguish between memory rooted in a specific geographical and temporal reality and that which is subjective, selective, syncretic, ineffable. This distinction, often blurred in the realm of immigrant retrospection, will be contextualized further on and I feel it important to introduce it now. Referring to songs that evoke "memories and hopes about particular places," Lipsitz makes a direct link between two concretes: the specific song which prompts memories of a specific place. I call it a "direct recollection;" a memory reflecting its factual source (inasmuch as it is "factual" to the one who is recollecting; equilibrium between fact and interpretation wavers).

When Lipsitz calls music a form of mass communication that "now circulates as an interchangeable commodity marketed to consumers all over the globe,"[39] he sees it as a cultural medium and a transnational commodity which, despite originating in a specific context and a specific place, in the climate of globalization becomes appropriated as a vessel for channeling local sentiments. In contrast to collective retrospection, in which a personal memory is bolstered by popular sentiment or is rooted in reality universally accepted as true, stimuli of individual retrospection "yield to consciousness … what consciousness has given them to absorb."[40] In other words, memories are human constructs, consisting of everything one invests them with, and not merely reflections of phenomena's innate properties. Memory in this picture is seen as a confluence of perceived reality and personal elaboration; it is an interplay of an object's or a phenomenon's observable characteristics *and* impressions and meanings generated by the subject-object convergence. As Sartre points out, "things can reflect for individuals only their own knowledge of them"[41] – a knowledge that flows from both the historical narrative and one's own comprehension of that narrative, one's constitution and experience. I concur that "today, shared cultural space no longer depends upon shared geographic place"[42] and that meanings metamorphose with each crossed border. But when local reality appropriates global cultural currents, for instance, it does not always forfeit representing its own concerns. Often, the universal and the subjective coexist, allowing for a broad range of meanings to be extracted and refined.

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[39] George Lipsitz. *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place.* (London; New York: Verso, 1994), 4.

[40] Keith H. Basso. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape." *Senses of Place.* Eds. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso. (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 1996), 56.

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[41] Keith H. Basso. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape." *Senses of Place*. Eds. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso. (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 1996), 55.
[42] Ibid, 6.

Chapter Two

Ethnic Portrait of Edmonton, and an Overview of the Arab and Egyptian Immigration to Canada

2.1. Edmonton's Ethnic Composition

Edmonton, a city of 927,202 residents, is home to over 165,000 first-generation immigrants.[43] Together with the second- and third-generation immigrants, they constitute nearly 80 percent of Edmonton's population. At the time of the 2001 census, the latest available demographic data, Canada's population numbered 30,007,094. 2,941,150 people lived in the province of Alberta, and 927,020 in Edmonton's Census Metropolitan Area (referred to thereafter as CMA). Edmonton's population comprised 755,965 Canadian-born residents, and of 165,235 foreign-born. There were only 237,740 individuals who indicated Canadian as their ethnic origin.[44] 47,2 percent of Edmonton CMA residents identified themselves as having an ethnic origin within Europe. The next most mentioned region of ethnic origin was the British Isles (39,9%), followed by North America (26,6%). French origins accounted for 12,2%, East and Southeast Asia origins for 7,9% and Aboriginal origins for 6,0%.

Canadian ethnic origins are claimed by 237,740 residents of Edmonton's Census Metropolitan area.[45] Canada is a former British colony so it is not surprising that

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[43] Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.

[44] Canadian origin was claimed either by Native Canadians or by those who did not know their ethnic ancestry or did not wish to self-identify with it.

[45] I have listed the number of total responses; for instance, those claiming both Canadian and Jewish or African and Egyptian ethnicity, were counted twice. It is interesting to note that of the 237,740 individuals who claimed Canadian as their ethnic origin, 129,139 had also claimed other(s). Only 108,600 individuals had claimed exclusively Canadian origin.

English ethnic background is claimed by as many as 214,500 Edmontonians. The third most represented ethnic ancestry is Scottish (164,665), followed by German (164,420) and Irish (140,030). Ukrainian diaspora, by far the most visible of Edmonton's ethnic groups, numbers 125,720. Ukrainian community's remarkable cohesiveness and its strong, vibrant presence on Edmonton's multicultural scene illustrate a phenomenon that is common among immigrant groups -- the concerted and vigorous effort to preserve and assert their cultural legacy, especially if that legacy is, or was, faced with a threat of foreign domination or annihilation. Ukrainians experienced such threat under the Soviets; exile provided them with the means to expose and rectify the aspects of the Ukrainian history that have been whitewashed by the Soviet revisionism. It also allowed them to reclaim and preserve their vast cultural inheritance.

Of course, not all communities with a history of strife manifest their national, ethnic, and religious identities with the same zeal and not all possess the cohesive organizational structure that would permit them to express those sentiments publicly. Some communities are simply too small and too diffuse to form dynamic and effective organizations. Individuals' economic standing and their reasons for migrating constitute additional, and crucial, factors in determining a group's cohesiveness. Economic immigrants[46], majority of whom come from the developing countries, tend to form more cohesive and mutually supportive cells than those who come as highly skilled workers or graduate students, the latter two often having been recruited by a company or an educational institution. They do not have the support network that a recruiting company or a university offers; lacking the necessary or in-demand skills and credentials, and the ability to speak the language, they rely on their fellow immigrants' support and guidance. They turn to the community associations, cultural clubs and religious organizations for advice and practical help, in effort to 'get connected.'

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[46] In most cases, emigration is economically motivated. Here, however, I mean those who emigrate for strictly economic reasons (including those without higher education and low-skilled workers) as opposed to those who, in addition to economic benefit, seek professional and social advancement.

It does not always follow that the larger the group, the better its organization and therefore visibility. Edmonton's Dutch and the Norwegian communities, though large (41,125 and 30,970, respectively), do not seem to play as prominent a part on the city's ethnic arena as do their Indian and Italian counterparts (26,120 and 22,390, respectively) which, though considerably smaller, seem a much more vibrant and dynamic part of Edmonton's ethnic scene.[47] Similarly, the Chinese community, at 44,445 only slightly larger than the Dutch community, seems to constitutes a much more expansive presence in Edmonton.

Generally, immigrants from the developed world, Ireland being one notable exception, do not flee oppressive regimes and seek material comforts inaccessible in their home countries. Their reasons for migrating and their economic standing upon entry into Canada contrast with those of immigrants from the developing world. It must be emphasized, however, that economic considerations transcend ethnic origins, social position and level of education. In most situations, they are the decisive factor in one's decision to emigrate. Most of the first-generation immigrants from the developed world migrate for educational opportunities and professional advancement, and they tend to be financially stable and independent. And while many immigrants from the developing world migrate for the same reasons (the high number of South Asian and Chinese émigré scholars and highly qualified workers attests to that), the percentage of those who come ready to commence any type of employment in their quest to improve their quality of life is decidedly higher. Lack of adequate funds on their arrival in Canada and uncertain prospects of employment encourage dependency on family members, friends and immigrant organizations. That, in turn, gives the immigrant organizations their raison d'être.[48]

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[47] Inferred from following local news items, media advertising of public events, and general visibility on the local cultural scene (festivals, film screenings, concerts, etc.).

Edmonton's Lebanese community well illustrates the phenomenon of economic immigration as well as the correlation between the educational and economic standing of the group's members and the group's close-knit structure. According to Statistics Canada's report, *Profile of Lebanese Immigrants in Canada*, based on the 1991 Census,

immigrants from Lebanon were "more likely than their counterparts among both the total immigrant and Canadian-born populations to work in clerical, sales, and service occupations."[49] 41% of the employed immigrant men and 64% of women worked in clerical, sales or service jobs, compared with 26% of both all immigrant and Canadian-born men and 53% all immigrant women and 58% Canadian born women. Lebanese immigrants were "considerably more likely than people in these other groups to be self-employed"[50] which in Edmonton is evidenced by quite a high number of Lebanese-owned shops and restaurants. The report mentions a relatively high unemployment rate among the Lebanese: "In 1991, 19,6 percent of all immigrant labour force participants from Lebanon were unemployed, compared with just over 10 percent of both all immigrants and the Canadian-born in the labour force."[51] It continues: "the incomes of immigrants from Lebanon living in Canada are lower than those of people in other groups. In 1990, immigrants from Lebanon had an average income from all sources of $19,000, compared with $25,300 for all immigrants and $23,700 for those born in Canada."[52]

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[48] The information contained in the preceding section was gleaned from Baha Abu-Laban's *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd, 1980).
[49] Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Profile of Lebanese Immigrants in Canada*. Immigration Research Series, 1996, 1.

The report indicates that the Lebanese immigrants were more likely than their counterparts among other immigrants and Canadian-born to live with their spouse and less likely to live alone or as single parents. Senior Lebanese immigrants were more likely to live with their families than seniors in other groups (65 percent among the

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[50] Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Profile of Lebanese Immigrants in Canada.* Immigration Research Series, 1996, 1.

[51] Ibid, 1.

[52] Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Profile of Lebanese Immigrants in Canada.* Immigration Research Series, 1996, 1. It must be pointed out that the report also mentioned that the Lebanese immigrants were more likely than other immigrants and those born in Canada to have a university degree. "In 1991, 18 percent of all immigrants from Lebanon aged 15 and over had a university degree, compared with 14 percent of all immigrants and 11 percent of the Canadian-born population." Illustrating the complexity of the Lebanese diaspora, the report also noted that the Lebanese immigrants were also more likely than the Canadian-born population to have education lower than Grade 9: 16 percent versus 13 percent.

Lebanese versus 61 percent among those born in Canada).[53] Those statistics attest to the remarkably cohesive nature of the Lebanese community.

Edmonton's Arab diaspora includes 930 Egyptians, 565 Syrians, 285 Iraqis, 115 Moroccans, 65 Algerians and 2015 Arabs not included elsewhere. Like other Arab communities in Canada, it is "more of a mental than a physical construct" and "is, above all, a community of interest, a community of social and kinship networks that transcend neighbourhood and municipal boundaries."[54] It is one of Canada's "least residentially segregated ethnic groups."[55] One notable exception to this rule is a centralized, tight-knit Arab ethnic community in Lac la Biche, a small town north of Edmonton. Baha Abu-Laban writes: "The crystallization of an Arab ethnic community in Lac La Biche, despite the small number of Arab residents in that locality… was a postwar development, due largely to its members' ethnic loyalty and success as fur traders, mink ranchers and shopkeepers."[56] The Syrian and Lebanese immigrants were the first Arabs to settle in Lac La Biche; they erected one of the first mosques in Canada and established Arabic language classes in the local public schools.

Edmonton's Arab communities, though geographically diffuse, are connected by the network of the city's mosques, churches, shops and community associations. Cultural events, such as concerts, film screenings, or dances, provide a meeting plateau for the community. Edmonton boasts Canada's first mosque, Al-Rashid Mosque, erected in 1938 through the efforts of 20 Lebanese Muslim families living at that time in Edmonton. Its Arabic bilingual program on primary and secondary school levels attracts over 400 students each year.

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[53] Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Profile of Lebanese Immigrants in Canada.* Immigration Research Series, 1996, 6.
[54] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada.* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd.), 63.
[55] Ibid, 63.
[56] Ibid, 61.

What place does the Egyptian diaspora occupy in this lively and thriving community? Where does it stand in relation to the Lebanese, the Arab at large, and other ethnic groups in Edmonton? How does it stand out? The following subsection will aim to answer those questions.

2.1.1. Egyptian diaspora of Edmonton

According to the 2001 census, there were 41,310 Canadians of Egyptian descent, of whom 2,290 resided in Alberta. According to Ibrahim Hayani, writing in 1999, "Egyptians [were] second only to the Lebanese in making up the Arab-Canadian population."[57] In the city of Edmonton, Egyptians numbered 930, but only 590 of them were statistically classified as immigrants and non-permanent residents. I found it difficult to ascertain the exact number of Egyptians in Edmonton for the following reasons: some were born in Egypt but are of other ethnic parentage and therefore do not figure in the demographic statistics as immigrants; some were born in Canada, but identify themselves as Egyptians; some identify themselves as Africans, and some Canadians, even though of Egyptian descent, do not acknowledge their roots, and cannot therefore, in my opinion, be labeled "Egyptian." In ascertaining the number of Egyptians in Edmonton, I relied as much on statistics as I did on informal estimates, such as those present in Alberta Government's International and Intergovernmental Relations website, http://www.iir.gov.ab.ca/international_relations/world_relations_middle_east.asp

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[57] Ibrahim Hayani, "Arabs in Canada: Assimilation or Integration?" *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 286.

Finally, in the attempt at standardization, I decided to accept the demographic data based on respondents' ethnic origins. It seemed to me the most inclusive, because in contrast to the data based on the respondents' place of birth, it considered ethnic self-identification. Many of those born in Egypt were not of the Egyptian ethnic origin (born to foreign diplomats or refugees) and did not identify themselves as Egyptian. On the other hand, many of the Egyptians born abroad, to parents studying in Russia or settled in Canada, held dual citizenship.

Members of the vast majority of the Egyptian diaspora of Edmonton are urban, middle-class students and professionals who emigrated in search of educational and professional advancement.[58] That is in stark contrast to Edmonton's Lebanese diaspora, whose majority represents economic immigration.[59] Reasons behind Egyptians' decisions to emigrate were manifold, but the pull factor of the fulfillment of professional aspirations and the push factor of the political and social conditions in their home country were the most influential. During Nasser's political-economic restructuring in the early 1960s, "the Egyptian government imposed severe restrictions on imports, luxury goods, foreign travel, and export of Egyptian currency."[60] The declining standard of living and restricted personal freedoms and rights led to widespread disaffection, which included "such occupational groups as industrialists, entrepreneurs, financiers, businessmen, large landowners, professionals, and some white-collar workers in the tertiary sector of industry." These "upper-level occupational categories," suggests Abu-Laban, "help[…] explain the select nature of Canada's immigration from Egypt, educationally and occupationally."[61] Many of the post-war migration were educated and financially stable professionals fleeing successive repressive regimes, from Nasser, through Sadat, to Mubarak. By far the largest number of Egyptians emigrated during the Sadat era as the advent of his open-door economic policy, *infitah*, allowed for greater international communication and movement. But while the educational and professional aspirations may have been of paramount importance in deciding to emigrate, the social and political considerations, ranging from shortage of jobs to curtailed freedom of speech and paucity of viable avenues of public participation, often accompanied them.

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[58] Majority of the Egyptian immigrants to Canada come from the cities. According to Richard H. Adams, Jr., immigrants from rural Egypt, unable to afford the high cost of international migration, tend to migrate to 'an Arab oil country: Iraq, Kuwait, or Saudi Arabia,' seeking work in the industrial and service sectors. Richard H. Adams Jr. "The Economic and Demographic Determinants of International Migration in Rural Egypt." *The Journal of Development Studies* 30 (1993): 146-149.

[59] While the economic need motivated emigration of both the Lebanese and the Egyptians, it was the vast majority of Egyptians, in contrast to many Lebanese, that emigrated in search of professional advancement, often already in possession of the required educational credentials. See Keck 1989 and Abu Laban 1988.

According to Lois Keck, "the most noteworthy attribute of [Egyptians] is the high level of skills they brought with them, allowing them easy entree into the host society, and quick attainment of relative affluence."[62] Most Egyptians arrived equipped with the knowledge of foreign languages, were Westernized and often secular in orientation (or 'nominally' religious); those factors greatly facilitated their assimilation into the host society.

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[60] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada.* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd.), 68.
[61] Ibid, 68.

Equipped with language and educational and professional qualifications to commence life abroad, the Egyptian diaspora does not require the kind of institutions that help to facilitate assimilation into the new surroundings and provide job and language assistance. For the vast majority of Egyptian immigrants, the process of Western acculturation had already begun in Egypt.

2.2. Overview of Arab immigration to Canada

According to Baha Abu-Laban, four Syrian men arriving in Montreal in 1883 were Canada's first Arab immigrants.[63] "The formative period for the Arab-Canadian community," writes Abu-Laban, "was between 1891 and 1901, during which time increasing numbers of Syrian immigrants were joining their kindred in Montreal and elsewhere in Canada."[64] According to the earliest available statistics on the geographical distribution of the Arab diaspora (for the year 1911), eighty percent of pioneer immigrants settled in Quebec and Ontario, and to a lesser degree in Nova Scotia, while the remaining twenty percent were scattered throughout the rest of the country.[65] By the year 1901, there were 2,000 Arab immigrants living on the Canadian soil, vast majority of them Syrian and Lebanese.

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[62] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd.), 122.

[63] Ibid, 53. Despite the national, religious, cultural, and linguistic differences among Arab immigrants, they do share "similar myths, folklore, music, art forms, food, customs, and ethos." (Skoggard) It is their many similarities that legitimize my decision to use the term 'Arab' to include all the members of the community.

[64] Ibid, 54. It must be pointed out that many pioneer Arab immigrants were classified at the port of entry as "Syrians," so while the majority of Arab immigrants was indeed Syrian, not all were Syrian-born, or named Syria as the place of recent residence. Michael W. Suleiman writes that until the Second World

Historians and social scientists distinguish two major waves of Arab migration to Canada: the first, encompassing the years 1882 to 1945, and the second, from the end of the Second World War to the present.[66] While the first wave consisted largely of Syrian and Lebanese Christians, the second wave witnessed migration from all over the Arab world, including Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria, and Iraq, and comprised a large Muslim contingent. Pioneer immigrants gravitated toward major

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War, the Arab immigrants have been referred to and have referred to themselves most often as Syrian or Syrian-Lebanese, simply because most of the pioneer immigrants came from Greater Syria, a designation encompassing the present-day countries and populations of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Iraq. It is often difficult to glean from the contemporary statistics the nationality of the immigrants beyond their being from Greater Syria as many of them classified Arabic speakers as "Syrians," regardless of their citizenship. Later surveys (recent Canadian statistics, for instance) classified immigrants according to the country of their last permanent residence, which may not have been the country of their origin. The immigration figures may therefore differ considerably from those provided by scholars and community leaders. Suleiman cautions: "It is impossible to determine the exact number of Arab immigrants to North America, because U.S. and Canadian immigration officials have at different times used different classification schemes. Until 1899 in the United States, for instance, immigration statistics lumped the Arabs with Greeks, Armenians, and Turks. For this and other reasons, only estimates can be provided." Michael W. Suleiman "Introduction: The Arab Immigrant Experience." *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 2.

[65] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 61.

[66] Baha Abu-Laban, Michael W. Suleiman and Lois Keck (though both focus on the immigration into the U.S., they acknowledge that a proportion of North America-bound immigrants made it into Canada. In addition, the similarities in the immigration patterns between the U.S and Canada often render the observations made about the former applicable to the latter, see footnote 63), Ibrahim Hayani, and Ian Skoggard (like all, he distinguishes two waves of migration but dates the second one to commence in the 1960s instead of immediately following the WWII).

cities such as Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa. Montreal, "[h]istorically, the Arab immigrants' first major destination in Canada,"[67] attracted the numerous French-speaking immigrants and, being a large centre, offered abundance of job opportunities. Within a relatively short time, it boasted a support network of ethnic organizations that helped the new arrivals gain a foothold in an unfamiliar environment and facilitated assimilation. The Arab diaspora expanded as new immigrants, encouraged by the success of their friends and relatives, joined them abroad. Ian Skoggard describes the circumstances surrounding the pioneer immigrants' migration thus:

> In the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman empire was in decline and numerous religious and civil wars forced some people to seek safer haven abroad. Also, a general economic decline forced individuals to seek a better life elsewhere. Halifax, Nova Scotia was the first stop on ship routes to North America and a point of departure for many immigrants. Familiarity with Western culture through Christian Missionaries and missionary schools in Lebanon and Syria influenced Arab emigrants' choice to come to Canada.[68]

According to Skoggard, the early immigrants were primarily young, enterprising men, majority of whom worked as laborers, shopkeepers, and itinerant peddlers.[69] Having amassed adequate capital, they brought their families (and often their brides) over from their home countries and settled in Canada's large urban centres. Such a chain of migration was fundamental in creating a cohesive Arab community in Canada.

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[67] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 60.

[68] Ian Skoggard. "Culture Summary: Arab Canadians." *eHRAF Collections of Ethnography*, Cross cultural database. (New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1998).

[69] Ibid. "These venturesome peddlers traveled to remote parts of northern Ontario and Quebec: Three Rivers, Sault St. Marie, North Bay, Cobalt, Cochrane, and Elk Lake, wherever their goods were in demand."

The largest wave of Arab migration into Canada fell between the years 1900 and 1914. By 1911, the Arab-Canadian population, consisting of mostly Lebanese and Syrians, numbered 7,000. While between the years 1900-1908 Canada admitted an estimated average of 600 Syrian immigrants annually, the years between 1909 and 1912 saw that number dwindle to 177. Between 1921 and 1931, Canada admitted a grand total of 74 persons from the Arab world.[70] The growth of the Arab-Canadian population between the 1920 and 1951 owed primarily to natural increase.[71] The drastic decline in Arab immigration following 1908 was largely due to Canada's discriminatory immigration policies, brought about, among other things, the intense public pressure to impose severe quotas on immigration. The two world wars and the economic depression of the 1930s have undeniably contributed to the diminished volume of immigration, but it was the restrictive immigration laws that became an insurmountable obstacle for many hopeful sojourners. If throughout its history "Canada has experienced an ebb and flow in its receptivity to new immigrants," the period following 1908 represented decisive flow.[72] Hayani writes:

> In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the salient view among most English Canadians was that the values and way of life of the white race were superior to all others, especially as these manifested themselves in British institutions. Preference was therefore given to British and American immigrants, followed by immigrants from western and northern Europe and then by those from the rest of Europe. Asians and blacks were the least preferred of all immigrants and were allowed in only when there was a demonstrated need for their labor… Since the immigrants from the Middle

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[70] Statistics gleaned from Abu Laban's *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada* and Skoggard's "Culture Summary: Arab Canadians."

[71] Ian Skoggard. "Culture Summary: Arab Canadians." *eHRAF Collections of Ethnography*, Cross cultural database. (New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1998).

[72] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada.* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 82.

> East eluded classification (some were white, some black, and interchangeably called Oriental, Asian, African (i.e. Egyptians, Somalis), or Arab), there were often grouped with the less desirable ethnicities and consequently discriminated against. "Concerns about 'ethnic purity' and the need to protect Canadians from the 'grave consequences' of having more Orientals come to Canada had a serious effect on immigration from the Arab world.[73]

The following statement made by the Reverend James S. Woodworth in 1919 illustrates the contemporary xenophobic sentiments: "Levantine Races [Syrians, Lebanese, Armenians, Greeks, Turks, and Persians-probably Assyrian Christians]...constitute one of the least desirable classes of our immigrants."[74] Abu-Laban offers this sketch of the sociopolitical climate surrounding Canadian immigration in the early twentieth century:

> From the 1880s on, the steady increase in the number of immigrants from countries other than the United States and those of Western Europe was met with a rising tide of public opposition…[T]wo restrictive Orders-in-Council came in 1908, … in response to British Columbia's agitation against the admission of immigrants from the Orient. The first order in council excluded immigrants "who did not come to Canada by *direct continuous journey* from their homeland" while the second imposed substantial landing fees on immigrants from Asia (included Syrians).[75]

The years following the end of WWII had witnessed the liberalization of Canada's immigration policy. According to Hayani, it was both the war and Canada's accession to the United Nations in 1945 that compelled Canadians to "reexamine their view of immigrants."[76] The changing political climate following the war, along with the pressure exerted by the various advocacy groups and ethnic organizations were instrumental in influencing the Canadian government to ease its repressive immigration regulations. Canada's Immigration Act of 1953, which rescinded some discriminatory restrictions on immigration, constituted a first step toward eradicating discrimination on the basis of national and ethnic origins.[77] The revised version of the Immigration Act, ratified in 1967, marked a final phase in the liberalization of the Canadian immigration policy. With quotas based on national and ethnic origin removed from the immigration code, Canadian immigration surged. Approximately 4,000,000 immigrants arrived in Canada between the years 1946 and 1975, and "[m]ore than 1 out of every 100…came from the Arab world."[78] The new immigrants, in sharp contrast to the pioneers, were predominantly Muslim, and tended to be highly educated and professional. While the early immigrants "were viewed and thought of themselves as mere sojourners …with the primary or sole purpose of making a fortune they could enjoy back home,"[79] the post-war immigrants were immigrating with an explicit goal to stay permanently. The post-war immigrants were also a group of unprecedented national diversity: countries represented by immigrants included Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Jordan, Tunisia,

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[73] Ibrahim Hayani. "Arabs in Canada: Assimilation?" *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 285.

[74] Quoted in Hayani 1999, 285.

[75] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 56. In the same paragraph, Abu-Laban adds: "Immigrants from Asia, in particular, were among the first to be viewed as undesirable. Due to heavy pressure from British Columbia, the Dominion government moved to restrict the entry of these immigrants. Thus, in 1885 a head tax of $50 was imposed on Chinese immigrants and, in 1903, this was raised to $500… [T]he 1907 Gentleman's Agreement between Japan and Canada… effectively curtailed the Japanese immigration."

[76] Ibrahim Hayani. "Arabs in Canada: Assimilation?" *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 285. In the twenty-first century,

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Canadians' liberal attitudes toward immigration are undergoing a profound shift. *The Globe and Mail* survey, conducted in 2004 (www.globeandmail.com), asked its respondents: "Should Canada increase or decrease the number of immigrants it accepts?" Out of 15.003 total votes, 49% (7378) responded "decrease," 27% (4078) voted "increase," and 24% (3547) wanted to preserve the status quo.

[77] Ibid, 285. The Immigration Act of 1953 classified Arab immigrants with Europeans rather than Asians and allowed them to apply for landed immigrant status. Arab immigrants were also "subject to more liberal rules of sponsorship by relatives who were Canadian residents."

[78] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 56-57.

[79] Michael W. Suleiman. "Introduction: The Arab Immigrant Experience." *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 2.

as well as Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Somalia, Mauritania, Yemen, and Oman.[80] And although the Lebanese and Syrians continued to make up the majority of the Arab diaspora, the largest component of the post-war Arab immigration to Canada was Egyptian.[81] According to Abu-Laban, "between the years 1946 and 1975 the largest number of immigrants from the Arab world came from Egypt, constituting 37,7 percent of the total number of immigrants.[82] Statistics indicate that during the interval between the years 1946-1997, 46,200 Egyptians immigrated to Canada, accounting for over 14 percent of the total Arab immigrant population.[83]

The decade of the 1960s saw 27,042 Arabs immigrate to Canada; in the 1970s, that number rose to 36,506, and in the 1980s it reached 61,893. In the 1990s, the Arab immigration swelled to 71,705.[84] According to the 2001 Canada Census, Egyptian diaspora numbered 41,310. 89 percent of the respondents were born in Egypt and 815 were classified as non-permanent residents.

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[80] Ian Skoggard. "Culture Summary: Arab Canadians." *eHRAF Collections of Ethnography*, Cross cultural database. (New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1998).

[81] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 136.

[82] Figures gleaned from the Immigration Statistics, quoted in Abu-Laban's *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980). The number of Egyptian immigrants includes those born in Egypt as well as those whose last place of residence was Egypt, and who may, but may not have been Egyptian nationals. The category "Country of last permanent residence" does not indicate nationality. "Because of the shift from 'ethnic origin' to 'country of last permanent residence' in the data reported in *Immigration Statistics,* it is not easy to determine the precise origins of Arab Canadians." Ibid, 59.

[83] Figures gleaned from Citizenship and Immigration Canada statistics.

[84] Ibid. Please note that those numbers represent the Arab population not included in other categories. Lebanese, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Iraqi, and Algerian immigrant populations are accounted for in separate categories, and number, respectively, 143,630; 41,310; 22,065; 21,355; 19,245; and 15,495. The

2.2.1. Egyptian immigration to Canada

Egyptian immigration to Canada did not commence in earnest until the late 1950s, when 52 immigrants arrived in 1957. During the intervening four years, it slowed down considerably, but flourished again in 1962, when a total of 1,187 Egyptians arrived to Canada. The lull in Egyptian immigration between the years 1958 and 1962 can be attributed to Canada's discriminatory immigration policies and severe restrictions on labor migration imposed by the Egyptian government. The historically low volume of Egyptian immigration, as suggested by Lois Keck, has been the Egyptians' "mythical" attachment to the land and a tribe.[85] Though the Egyptian government's emigration restrictions were eased only in 1974, Canadian immigration statistics demonstrate that even during the preceding decade the Egyptian immigration to Canada continued to steadily crescendo. The Middle Eastern political climate of the 1960s and 1970s initiated the unprecedented influx in Egyptian immigration. The Egyptians' long-simmering disaffection with the authoritarian regime, limited opportunities for professional advancement, and low standard of living, further stimulated by Nasser's political and economic restructuring of the early 1960s prompted the mass exodus for the West. Egypt's 1973 war with Israel provided additional

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total Arab diaspora numbers in excess of 330.000 (classification is based on respondents' place of birth and does not include ethnic self-identification).

[85] Lois T. Keck. "Egyptian Americans in the Washington DC Area," *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change*. Ed. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 105.

stimulus for Egyptian emigration.[86] The type of repressive regime initiated by Nasser would be continued by his next two successors, Sadat and Mubarak, who under the mask of pluralism and liberalism methodically eliminated any political opposition. The 1970s witnessed the annual average of 500 Egyptian arrivals into Canada; in 1987 that number increased to 1,066 and two years later reached 1,556.[87]

In her article "Egyptian Americans in the Washington DC Area," Lois T. Keck observes:

> The Egyptians are uniquely interesting because they are culturally and educationally different from earlier and other immigrant groups, whether from the Middle East or elsewhere. Their time of arrival and their educational attainments distinguish the Egyptians from Middle eastern groups that immigrated earlier, such as the Lebanese in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, and from current refugee groups such as the Afghans, the central Americans, or the Southeast Asians.[88]

Even though she is explicitly writing about the Egyptian diaspora in the United States, the many parallels between the American and Canadian immigrant experience render her observations applicable to Canadian immigration. Her characterization of the Egyptian immigrants in the U.S. is consonant with my experience of the Egyptian diaspora during the years I spent living and working in Edmonton. The introduction to *The Muslim Community in North America* articulates that parallel thus:

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[86] While most Egyptian emigrants were destined for the United States, some made it to Canada. In the 1970s and 1980s, "Kuwait, Iraq, and outside the Arab world, the United States, were preferred destinations of Egyptian emigrants." *Allrefer.com Reference and Encyclopedia Resource.* http://reference.allrefer.com/country-guide-study/egypt/egypt65.html
Michael Suleiman and Baha Abu-Laban, in their introduction to *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change,* write: "The Arab community in North America in mid-1980s numbered approximately 3 million individuals, of whom only about two hundred thousand resided in Canada."

[87] Ian Skoggard. "Culture Summary: Arab Canadians." *eHRAF Collections of Ethnography*, Cross cultural database. (New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1998).

[88] Lois T. Keck. "Egyptian Americans in the Washington DC Area," *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change.* Ed. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 103.

> [W]e have settled for the descriptive term 'North American' because immigrants themselves have traditionally made little distinction between the two countries [the U.S. and Canada] in terms of social characteristics and values, and because the total cultural position of North America is one of official secularism" and "there are common issues and problems, shared experiences and ideals...[89]

The largest number of Egyptian immigrants arrived between years 1986 and 1991. In 1991, a total of 11,900 persons of Egyptian origin immigrated to Canada, and two percent of that number settled in Edmonton. By 1996, there were 35,570 Egyptians living in Canada, majority of whom resided in Ontario (16,120), followed by Quebec (14,740), Alberta (1,865) and British Columbia (1,735). Egyptians, similarly to their Lebanese and Syrian predecessors, gravitated toward major urban centres. Montreal, with 13,980 Egyptian inhabitants, constituted the nucleus of the Egyptian community in Canada. The cultural and linguistic legacy of the French conquest of Egypt helps to explain Montreal's status as a preferred destination for Egyptian immigrants. Laila Shukry El-Hamamsy writes: "Though of short duration (from 1798 to 1801), the French occupation was a deeply significant event in the history of the country, for it paved the way for modern Egypt."[90] She adds:

> By the ease of their military victory and by the display of their science and technology, [the French] had undermined the complacency of Egypt's

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[89] Earle H. Waugh et al. *The Muslim Community in North America*. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983), 2.

[90] Laila Shukry El-Hamamsy. "The Assertion of Egyptian Identity." *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change*. Eds. George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 281.

> traditional society. By exposing the Egyptians to new administrative methods, as well as political beliefs and educational concepts, they had generated the first signs of a mood of self-questioning and self-doubt which acted as an important stimulus for change.[91]

According to Abu-Laban, it was Napoleon Bonaparte's conquest of Egypt that not only "awakened the Arab people from their deep slumber and sharpened their curiosity about the West and interest in modernization"[92] but also established strong economic and intellectual ties between Egypt and the West. "As a result," Abu-Laban writes, "a good portion of the contemporary educated elite in Egypt is still oriented, both linguistically and intellectually, towards France."[93]

The following profile of the post-war wave of Arab migration aptly describes the overwhelming majority of the Egyptian diaspora in Canada.

> In contrast to the first wave of immigrants, who were mostly uneducated, poor, and often illiterate, the second, post-WWII wave of migration witnessed the arrival of affluent, highly educated professionals, familiar with the language and customs of their adopted country. Some were already trained as lawyers, doctors, engineers, or teachers, while others immigrated to attend universities and remained (due to conflict back home, lack of employment opportunities there, or lucrative offers in America).[94]

Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban offers similar assessment, also representative of the Egyptian diaspora:

> Post-war immigrants were economically and educationally advantaged *before* coming to North America. Many advanced their education still further. They were often fluent in English or French and so they arrived in North America with attributes that put their cohort ahead of the average, both immigrant *and*

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[91] Laila Shukry El-Hamamsy. "The Assertion of Egyptian Identity." *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change*. Eds. George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 283.

[92] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 38

[93] Ibid, 38.

[94] Michael W. Suleiman. "Introduction: The Arab Immigrant Experience." *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 2.

> native-born. They tended to be Westernized, and often had secular and nationalist orientation."[95]

Historically, the vast majority of Egyptian immigrants in Canada have been Coptic Orthodox (Arab diaspora has largely been Muslim). The long-standing persecution of the Copts in Egypt is one of the reasons for the high rate of emigration among them.[96] Egyptian diaspora also included numerous Muslims as well as Protestants and some Roman Catholics. Egyptian immigrants tended to be highly educated professionals – doctors, engineers, teachers, and academics – for whom emigration represented an avenue for the fulfillment of professional and social aspirations and improving their standard of living. Many immigrated as students, and eventually, encouraged by the promising career prospects, decided to turn their sojourn into a permanent stay.

The intended areas of employment of Egyptians immigrating into Canada in 1959 encompassed clerical, communications, commercial, sales, trade, finance, medicine (including surgery), academia, teaching, and banking. There were very few Egyptians working as mechanics, repairmen, barbers, nurses' aides, and cooks. Forty years later, the numbers surged, and a range of occupations broadened. In 1996, a vast majority of Egyptian immigrants were employed in areas of natural sciences, engineering, math, (many as academics), followed by medicine and health, clerical and related occupations, managerial and administrative, and sales. Other professions included teachers, entrepreneurs, investors, and art, literature, and performing artists.[97]

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[95] Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban. "The Coexistence of Cohorts: Identity and Adaptation Among Arab-American Muslims." *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change*. Ed. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 53.

[96] For more information on the persecution of the Copts in Egypt, read excerpts from an article on the Egyptian government's (mis)treatment of its Christian Coptic minority, originally published in 2002 in the Arabic-language London daily *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, reprinted on The Middle East Media Research Institute's website: http://memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=subjects&Area=reform&ID=SP35202

The information on the Egyptian immigrants' economic activities between 1956-1974, collated and published by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, revealed that "of the five Arab countries which supplied over 90% of [Arab] immigrants (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Jordan), Egypt provided the most highly professionalized immigrant labor force entrants."[98] According to these statistics, nearly 40% of Egyptian immigrants "intended to follow a professional or semiprofessional occupations, and an almost equal proportion had plans for white collar occupations,"[99] contrasted with only 20% of Lebanese, Moroccan, Syrian, and Jordanian immigrants.

Abu-Laban distinguishes the two opposing forces involved in migration. "Pull" factor includes economic and educational opportunities, higher standard of living, stable political climate, social services, and protection for ethnic and religious minorities; "push" includes authoritarian regime, poverty, limited opportunities for professional advancement, low standard of living, discrimination based on ethnicity and religion.[100]

For a vigorous denial of Egypt's maltreatment of Copts, see Ibrahim Nafie's article "The Same Old Game," published in *Al-Ahram*. 12-18 November 1998. http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1998/403/op1.htm

[97] Gleaned from the documents prepared by the Statistics section of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Canada. Statistics Canada, 1954.

[98] Quoted in Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 118.

[99] Ibid, 118.

[100] Ibid, 78.

In the post-war Egypt, the nature of the "push" factor was exemplified by "[s]uch terms as political instability, insecurity, loss (or fear of loss) of freedom, political repression, discriminatory treatment, and government policy (e.g. socialism)."[101]

Pull of the family was rarely quoted by the Egyptian immigrants as a motivating factor in immigration. According to the results of Abu-Laban's fieldwork, "immigrants from Egypt tended to verbalize political disaffection and hopes for a higher standard of living and better future more frequently, and family reasons less frequently, than immigrants from other Arab states."[102] For the Arab Muslims in Alberta, for instance, the pull of the family was a primary incentive for immigrating to Canada, and was cited by 57 percent of respondents. Only 37 percent foregrounded economic incentives.

Prospects of educational and career advancement (not precluding economic gains), followed by political considerations (disillusionment with the economic and social policies of their country's successive governments) were Egyptians' main reasons for immigration to Canada.

In addition to the educational and professional aspirations and Westernized orientation, the elements that distinguished Egyptian immigrants from many of their Arab counterparts were the familiarity with languages and the culture of their adopted country as well as the similarities in appearance (Western attire and, among some, light skin). While some Arab communities' hermetic nature made assimilation an arduous and often unsuccessful process, Egyptians' ability to straddle the cultures greatly mitigated the challenges of adaptation.

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[101] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada.* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1980), 78. Even though Abu-Laban was writing in the late 1970s, his perspective is still valid in 21st century Egypt.

[102] Ibid, 78.

Chapter Three

Overview of Egyptian Music in the Twentieth Century

The musical culture of twentieth-century Egypt is characterized by the cross-fertilization of styles and genres. The "purely" Egyptian musical language, *musiqa arabiyyah,* is an expansive term that defines a heterogeneous entity encompassing regional folk and religious genres as well as a strong Arabic classical music tradition with an intricate theory formulated between the ninth and thirteenth centuries. Salwa El-Shawan defines *musiqa arabiyyah* as "a generic term [used] to designate musical idioms that are composed and performed by Arabs and that adhere to the norms of Arab music style as perceived by musicians and audiences."[103] In her 1984 article, El-Shawan adds,

> Arab music also refers to an Egyptian category of secular urban music which is distinguished by its producers and consumers on the basis of its principles of musical organization (*maqam, iqa*[104], and vocal and instrumental forms), concepts of composition and ornamentation as well as vocal and instrumental style. Arab music is divided by most of its practitioners into two subcategories: *al-turath* (literally, the heritage) and *al-jadid* (literally, the new).[105]

Ali Jihad Racy's classification of the musical domains present in Cairo in the latter part of the twentieth century recognized two primary domains: central and peripheral. The central domain "is found in the cities and is associated with a professional craft of singing and performing on local instruments including the '*ud*, the

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[103] Salwa El-Shawan. "Egypt." *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 4th ed.

[104] *Maqam* (pl. *maqamat*) and *iqa* (pl. *iqa'at*) are Arabic terms for melodic mode and rhythmic mode, respectively.

[105] Salwa El-Shawan. "Traditional Arab Music Ensembles in Egypt since 1967: 'The Continuity of Tradition Within the Contemporary Framework ?'" *Ethnomusicology* 28 (1984), 271-272.

nay, the *qanun*, the violin, and the *riqq*."[106] It is considered a nuclear component of the Cairene musical life because of its pervasiveness, popularity, and ability to draw from the musical styles of other repertoires.

The peripheral domain is characterized as having smaller or occasional audiences thus lying outside the mainstream of musical life. This domain includes indigenous religious music, Arab folk music, "old" Arabic music dating from before 1919, and Western art and popular music – in other words, types that are not widely disseminated. The conceptual and stylistic boundaries between central and peripheral domains are, of course, very fluid, as most of the genres noted above as peripheral may also cross into the central domain. For instance, religious music, although classified by Racy as "peripheral" has always enjoyed immense popularity. Religious *qasa'id* were composed using colloquial language and accessible melodies to appeal to a wider audience. In the latter part of the twentieth century, various performers achieved fame by performing syncretic genres, many with the use of Western instruments. Folk music, once only performed in familiar settings of small villages, and "young people's music"[107] have become very popular in the latter part of the twentieth century and are performed in stadiums and featured on television.

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[106] Ali Jihad Racy. "Music in Contemporary Cairo: A Comparative Overview." *Asian Music* 13 (1981), 11.

[107] *Musiqa Shababiyya* is a broad genre termed loosely, developed in the 1980s, and draws extensively on local repertoires, rock, jazz, rap, international pop, and older Arabic traditions. Ensembles performing this fusion style use Western electric keyboards, guitars, as well as some indigenous hand drums.

Western paradigms of art, folk, and popular music are not pertinent in the study of Egyptian music, and many of the stylistic distinctions assigned by Egyptian themselves have become anachronistic due to the emergence of many syncretic genres that elude conventional typology.

The following is an overview of the genres and instruments most prevalent in twentieth-century Egypt.

Vocal genres are central in music of the Arab world. They can be divided into sacred and secular as well as urban and folk categories. Sacred and secular genres are classified according to their text. Thus, the same genre can straddle both realms depending on the type of poetry used. Distinctions between urban and folk styles are based on text as well as melodic treatment and instrumental accompaniment. Colloquial texts, simple melody and sparse accompaniment are characteristic of folk genres. Urban genres, while often featuring colloquial texts as well, base their melodies on complex system of *maqam* and use larger instrumental ensembles. In contrast to folk genres, urban styles are generally more widely disseminated and their audiences represent all social strata. Since many genres are subject to incessant renewal, these distinctions, while useful, are merely provisory.

Qasidah, *muwashshah*, and *mawwal* straddle sacred and secular realms. *Dawr*, *ughniyyah*, *taqtuqa*, *zajal*, monologue, and *waslah* suite are secular. All feature a flexible structural framework, and only *muwashshah* and *dawr* are metrical. All feature improvisatory sections. *Mawwal* and *zajal* belong to the folk realm while all the other genres are part of the urban domain.

Taqasim is the sole instrumental genre in the Egyptian musical realm. It is secular and constitutes a part of the urban domain.

The aforementioned genres are listed below for easy reference.

***Qasidah* (pl. *Qasa'id*)**-dating from pre-Islamic times, *qasidah* is a classical Arabic poetic genre with religious and moralistic overtones that has enjoyed an immense popularity throughout the Arab world. Cast in a literary Arabic and through-composed in form, *qasidah* is an essential component of the Arabic literary and musical heritage. Rendition of an "old" *qasidah* (as opposed to the new, urbanized, colloquial interpretations) "requires a command of literary Arabic and standard, rather than colloquial, articulation of letters."[108] Thus, *qasidah* illustrates the adoption of Qur'anic clarity of articulation and a grasp of literary language into a popular song. Historically performed by a solo vocalist with sparse instrumental accompaniment, *qasa'id* were often given complex musical settings in which improvisation and a degree of virtuosity were given a prominent role. Subject to constant renewal, *qasa'id* composed in the twentieth century featured colloquial texts, often amorous in nature, and stylistic innovations heavily influenced by Western compositional models. *Qasidah's* amalgamation of the indigenous and the foreign illustrates well the fervor for musical innovation that is characteristic of Egyptian music. Both sacred and secular, depending on the text, occasion, and performance venue, *qasidah* straddles both realms.

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[108] Virginia Danielson. "The *Qur'an* and the *Qasidah:* Aspects of the Popularity of the Repertory Sung by Umm Kulth'um." *Asian Music* 19 (1987), 32.

Ughniyyah **(pl. *Aghani*)**-literally "a song", *ughniyyah* is a syncretic vocal genre characterized by colloquial texts and flexible structure that often includes a refrain or other forms of internal repetition. A mosaic of musical sources, *ughniyyah* drew from the traditional Arabic as well as Western music. Harmonic treatment of the accompaniment, passages in well-tempered scale, and use of Western instruments were common innovations in *ughniyyah*. Established by the renowned Egyptian vocalist Umm Kulthum as a model of the new Egyptian song, *ughniyyah*, sometimes called "a long song" incorporated many elements of the *waslah*, the Arabic suite of vocal and instrumental pieces. It featured "pre-composed instrumental introductions and interludes as well as instrumental and vocal improvisation, and provided solo vocalists with an opportunity to display their virtuosity."[109]

Dawr **(pl. *Adwar*)**-a virtuosic, metrical vocal genre developed in 19th century Egypt by Abd al-Hamuli (d. 1901) and Muhammad Uthman (d. 1900), *dawr* "typically includes two sections, the second of which features choral responses to a solo rendition of lines and a virtuosic improvisation on the syllable 'ah.'"[110] As a culminating piece of the

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[109] Salwa El-Shawan. "Egypt." *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 4th ed.

[110] Virginia Danielson. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulth'um, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 203.

waslah suite, *dawr* drew on the traditional elements of Arabic song such as melodic and rhythmic modes. In the twentieth century, *dawr* became a feature of theatrical performances, radio and television programs, and musical films as a "modernized heritage" form.[111]

***Muwashshah* (pl. *Muwashshahat*)**-a refined, metrical song, typical of Syria and North Africa, brought to Egypt in the late 17th century. Similar to *qasidah*, it is a sacred or secular poetic genre, and when set to music, demanded a thorough command of *maqamat* (melodic modes). Just like *qasidah*, *muwashshah* functioned as a pedagogical foundation for many singers' careers, as it embodied the fundamental elements of indigenous Arabic music.[112] At the end of the previous century this genre was used primarily for pedagogical purposes.

***Taqtuqah* (pl. *Taqatiq*)**-a strophic, colloquial song developed in the 1920s, noted for its simplicity. A feature of the musical play of the twenties, *taqtuqah* was set to a short, memorable melody and mostly focused on love and feminine beauty, oftentimes employing objectionable lyrics, but it also treated political and social issues. *Taqtuqah* was shaped by mass media to suit the time limitations imposed by the recording industry and radio and they profited from the short, memorable song's success. It was easy for the performer to learn, and for the audience to remember. In response to audience demands, *taqtuqah,* although despised by purists, was sung by renowned vocalists such as Umm Kulthum and enjoyed immense popularity.

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[111] Salwa El-Shawan. "Egypt" in *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 4th ed. For more on the concept of "modernized heritage" in music of the twentieth century Egypt see Racy's "Musical Aesthetics in Present-Day Cairo" in *Ethnomusicology* 26 (1982), 401-404.

[112] Virginia Danielson. "The Arab Middle East." *Popular Music of the Non-Western World: An Introductory Survey*. Ed. Peter Manuel. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 143.

Mawwal **(pl. *Mawawil*)**-a sacred and secular poetic genre in colloquial Arabic dating from the 12th century and often associated with rural musical culture. Part of the folk domain, *mawwal* is either rooted in, or evocative of rural life. It features a simple melody and requires clear delivery of text and a sparse instrumental accompaniment. According to Danielson, "recent Egyptian examples frequently have 4-7 lines of text on which a solo singer improvises; puns, creative rhymes, and other plays on words characterize it."[113] *Mawwal* is often preceded by improvisation on the words "*Ya leel, ya 'een*" (oh night, oh eye) called *layali.*

Zajal **(pl. *Azjal*)**-a type of colloquial poetry. Along with *mawwal*, *zajal* belonged to the folk domain and enjoyed particular popularity among the middle and lower classes in the 1920s.

Monologue (***Munuluj Atifi***, lit. sentimental monologue)-a predecessor of the contemporary cumulative form *ughniyyah.* This vocal genre emerged in the 1920s, stimulated by the popularity of theatrical music; its role was to express sentiments in a dramatic and descriptive manner. The monologue "followed a precomposed but irregular format" and "its poetical stanzas were set to a different melody, rhythm, and sometimes *maqam.*"[114]

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[113] Virginia Danielson. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulth'um, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 203.
[114] Ali Jihad Racy. "Musical Aesthetics in Present-Day Cairo." *Ethnomusicology* 26 (1982), 398.

***Taqsim* (pl. *Taqasim*)**-a rhythmically free instrumental solo improvisation which constituted an integral part of the *waslah* before the 1930s, rarely occurring independently. *Taqsim*'s role was to introduce the *maqam* of the upcoming song and provide an instrumentalist the opportunity to display his musicality and technical ability. Today *taqsim* appears in the nightclub setting as part of the dance routines.[115]

***Waslah* (pl. *Wasalat*)**-a suite of vocal and instrumental compositions and improvisations, *waslah* encompassed descriptive songs, instrumental pieces, skits, and spoken dialogue. The standard order of pieces in *waslah* is as follows: metrical instrumental piece; metrical vocal piece (*muwashshah*); *taqsim*; *layali*; *mawwal*, and a climactic feature, either *qasidah* or *dawr*.[116] Popular at the gatherings of men at the turn of the century, *waslah* was influenced by the musical theatre of the 1920s and then by Egyptian film. Lasting anywhere between half hour to an hour and a half (and an evening performance could include 3 *wasalat*) *waslah* was abbreviated in the 1930s to suit the time limitations imposed by the radio and recording industry, and disappeared from the musical scene by the 1940s. It became archaic when the larger ensemble replaced the smaller *takht* and Western models of performance were introduced. The large ensemble limited its repertoire to precomposed material thus eradicating improvisation, eliminated a soloist, started to use notation, and featured a conductor. Since the latter twentieth century instrumental and vocal suites continued to be performed, but they adhered to the demands of the Westward-looking yet Eastern-rooted public. To quote Salwa El-Shawan again, they displayed "the continuity of tradition within a contemporary framework."[117]

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[115] Ali Jihad Racy. "Music in Contemporary Cairo: A Comparative Overview." *Asian Music* 13 (1981), 14.

[116] Virginia Danielson. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulth'um, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 145-46.

Until very recently, instrumental music lay on the periphery of the Egyptian soundscape. Although instrumental improvisation is a prominent aspect of Arabic music, historically it is vocal music which has occupied the central position in the Arab world's musical life. In 1980, musicologist Habib Hasan Touma observed that "after over a thousand years of Arab history, musical life is…still centered on the person of the singer."[118] The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of solo instrumental music, a trend in part inspired by the Western performance model.[119] Predominantly, however, instruments continue to fulfill the accompanying role for the voice. Instruments standard in music performance of twentieth-century Egypt are:

- *Ud* – fretless short-necked lute with five or six pairs of strings.
- *Qanun* – a trapezoidal plucked zither with 26 courses of three strings.
- Violin, called *kaman* or *kamanjah*
- *Nay* – an end-blown wooden flute with 7 holes.
- *Riqq*, a tambourine.

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[117] See Salwa El-Shawan's article "Traditional Arab Music Ensembles in Egypt Since 1967" for more information on *waslah* in the context of the modernization of the musical scene in the late twentieth century Egypt.

[118] Habib Hasan Touma. "History of Arabian Music-A Study." *The World of Music* 22 (1980), 72.

[119] Two of the many successful instrumentalists are the *ud* virtuoso Farid al-Atrash whose recordings constitute an integral part of Egyptian musical legacy, and Mitqal al-Qinnaw, a *rabab* player as well as a singer who toured internationally.

From the turn of the century until the 1930s, the ensemble that constituted the customary accompanying group for a vocalist was called the *takht*. It consisted of 2-5 members, and was lead by the *qanun* player who doubled the singer, was free to ornament certain passages, and was responsible for the tuning of the ensemble. Under the growing influence of musical theatre, which featured ensembles larger than *takht* and included Western instruments such as cello, piano, clarinet, and flute, changes were gradually implemented. A larger size and broader variety of instruments were thought to express ideas better than *takht*.

Firqah, an Arabic generic term for any type of group, became the expanded *takht.* The vocal soloist remained a central feature of the group, instruments were doubled (with the exception of the *riqq*), new ones were added, the choir was enlarged, and a conductor became a part of the ensemble. Traditional Arab music groups that proliferated following the 1967 founding of The Arab Music Ensemble by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture were dedicated to the revival and reinterpretation of the past. By the late nineties, the ensembles resembled expansive Western orchestras, with as many as 15 violins, and new instruments such as cellos, double bass and clarinets added. Norms of Western orchestral performance were adopted: these included fixed programs, eliminated improvisation, music notation, a concert hall setting, silence during the performance, and formalized applause.

The years of British occupation of Egypt (1882-1922) witnessed the erosion of the traditional music guilds as the presence of Western or West-inspired music and musicians became more vivid on the country's cultural firmament. The most popular genres of the era, musical play and *vaudeville*, drew on the Western models, and with the advent of the recording industry and film changes had to be introduced in the choice and structure of a musical piece to accommodate these media.

Concern about Egypt's image to the world was a crucial factor in shaping its musical landscape. Perceived as the ultimate in innovation and refinement, Western music and its peripheral factors (performance venues, audience's conduct during a concert, printed programmes, etc.) constituted an important part of the Egyptian cultural life and were influential for composers and performers. In the light of sociopolitical tremors of the past century, the "international music," *musiqa alamiyyah*, became an emblem for cultural and social change, for the desired progress. Western penetration was encouraged and facilitated by the "enlightened" Khedive Ismail, who pledged to make Egypt "part of Europe." From the time of his rule until the 1952 revolution led by Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser foreign communities flourished in Egypt. The French, English, Italians, and Greeks brought their cultural traditions and tastes with them, and although the vast majority of Egyptians were only marginally affected, European influence lingered and became symbolic of progress and abundance. Foreign schools, both secular and religious, were established, and foreign-language newspapers, radio programs, and films proliferated.[120] One significant outcome of the Western cultural presence in Egypt was the founding of the Cairo Conservatory in 1959. The mission of the Conservatory was

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[120] Selim Sednaoui. "Western Classical Music in Umm Kulthum's Country." *Images of Enchantment: Visual and Performing Arts of the Middle East.* Ed. Sherifa Zuhur. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1998), 124.

> to give the students a thorough knowledge of Egyptian folkloric music and of Arabic music as well as the traditional Western musical disciplines of theory, composition, conduction, instrumental playing, voice, music education, and musicology. Thus, the philosophy of the Conservatory aimed to bridge the gap between the two cultures and provide future musicians with a solid base in both fields of music.[121]

Of course, the enrollment was largely limited to students from the upper class families as was the attendance of the Western concerts. However with the advent of the recording industry, film, and the most influential mass medium of all, television, Western ideals were not just the domain of the wealthy as they permeated nearly every household.

While a significant percentage of Egypt's population identified strongly with the West and readily adopted Western models as representatives of innovation and progress, they also strove to maintain the indigenous element in their music. In Egypt's fervent quest for the novel and innovative, the traditional character was by no means peripheral. The immense popularity of such artists as Umm Kulthum and Sayyid Darwish who employed traditional Arabic musical elements in their compositions (complex melodic and rhythmic modes, elevated language, moral themes) attests to the fact that the Egyptian audiences strongly identified with these traditional aspects in music. Perhaps, as Virginia Danielson suggests, it also signified the recourse to the indigenous values and a turn away from "Weststruckness".

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[121] Selim Sednaoui. "Western Classical Music in Umm Kulthum's Country." *Images of Enchantment: Visual and Performing Arts of the Middle East.* Ed. Sherifa Zuhur. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1998), 125.

> Seen in the nineteenth century as a positive model, more critically in the early twentieth century as a source of material culture but not moral authority, by the 1940s the West became associated with materialism and an individualistic perspective on life that offered no basis for societal morality.[122]

The nationalistic tide that swept through Egypt at the time of the 1952 revolution introduced changes in the political as well as the cultural arena. The turn against the West was strengthened by the 1956 Suez War, an attack on the Canal Zone by Britain, France, and Israel as retaliation for Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal.[123] Many foreign residents left Egypt, but their legacy remained firmly grounded in the Egyptian cultural panorama. During the Nasser years, instead of importing foreign musicians and teachers, the focus was placed on recruiting the local talent. According to Selim Sednaoui's survey conducted in 1997, of the 101 members of the Cairo Symphony Orchestra (established in 1956), forty-seven were Egyptian while fifty- four were Eastern European.[124]

During the Nasser period and beyond, Western classical music continued to be performed alongside the traditional Arabic genres. In a place saturated with many diverse cultural elements, the traditional coexists with the foreign and crossover styles, and each domain has a captive audience. There are some basic differences between Arabic and Western music, such as monophony versus polyphony and modes featuring quarter tones versus the well tempered scale. For many, the greatest success is attained by "adapt[ing] the alien tradition without effacing the old," in order to maintain the rapport with the audience and at the same time innovate.[125]

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[122] Virginia Danielson. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 124.
[123] Selim Sednaoui. "Western Classical Music in Umm Kulthum's Country." *Images of Enchantment: Visual and Performing Arts of the Middle East.* Ed Sherifa Zuhur. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1998), 125.
[124] Ibid, 126.

Innovation has always been a crucial ingredient in both performance and composition, and a balanced fusion of the traditional with the innovative has been considered a pinnacle of achievement. Comparing two musical traditions, Ali Jihad Racy sheds light on the importance of the current political and cultural challenges as primary goals of a musician by stating, "if the artistic impetus of Indian music seems past-directed, that of Cairo's music is unmistakably present-oriented."[126] An artist gains recognition for innovation on the traditional models, not for the mere preservation and reproduction of the models themselves.

Today, if Western art music remains a symbol of progress and cultural sophistication, it is the popular Arabic genres, Western-inspired but rooted in the indigenous tradition and urban folk music that have the largest following among Egyptians, regardless of their social status. In the large centers such as Cairo, Western classical music coexists with the indigenous folk tradition. While Egyptians aim at modernization of Arabic music, they want the process to stem from indigenous models, and proceed along culturally authentic lines. Thus, a delicate balance of the indigenous and modern is struck. The goal is “the continuity of tradition within a contemporary framework.”[127]

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[125] Walter Armbrust. *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 91.
[126] Ibid, 11.

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[127] Salwa El-Shawan. “Traditional Arab Music Ensembles in Egypt since 1967: ‘The Continuity of Tradition Within a Contemporary Framework ?’” *Ethnomusicology* 28 (1984), 286.

Chapter Four

Case studies: first-generation Egyptian immigrants.

4.1. Introduction

> We have a notion of identity as contradictory, as composed of more than one discourse, as composed always across the silences of the other, as written in and through ambivalence and desire. These are extremely important ways of trying to think an identity which is not a sealed or closed totality.[128]

I open with these words by Stuart Hall because they encapsulate the notion of identity I attempt to convey in this study. I developed the conception of identity as a heterogeneous, cumulative, and spherical process during the course of my fieldwork, and consider it central to my discourse. Definition of identity as a confluence of the subjective and the objective forces, of the essential and the socially determined, articulates the central thread of this chapter's argument, setting the stage for the upcoming discussion.

Tia DeNora, drawing on the recent developments in social theory, delivers a less holistic definition of identity. Conceptualizing identity as a process encompassing projection of biography (presentation of self to others), and introjection (presentation of self to self), she diminishes the significance of its inherent determinants. DeNora observes that identity is "no longer conceptualized…as something that is an expression of inner 'essence,'" but instead "has been recast conceptually as a product of social

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[128] Stuart Hall. "Old and New Identities: Old and New Ethnicities," *Culture, Globalization, and World System.* Ed. Anthony King. (London: Macmillan, 1991), 49.

'work.'"[129] Thus defined, identity is "realized in and through practices – textual and social,"[130] whereby the thread of individual narrative is consciously "construct[ed], reinforce[d] and repair[ed],"[131] not merely unveiled. She describes identity as a "reflexive process of remembering/constructing who one is" and "spinning the apparently continuous tale of who one is."[132]

In a similar vein, Simon Frith argues that identity is shaped according to narrative forms, and originates "from the outside not the inside." Individuals choose the narrative patterns around which they structure their lives rather than freeing their essential "self" to determine, or at least contribute to, the patterns' trajectory. Characterizing identity as a mobile process, "becoming, not a being,"[133] Frith declares that "it is something we put or try on, not something we reveal or discover."[134] His conception of identity as a socially determined rather than a syncretic entity-amalgam of the cross-fertilizing conscious *and* the innate-suggests a unidirectional, rather than a symbiotic, mode of identity formation. Drawing on Jonathan Ree's perspective[135], Frith concludes that "personal identity is…'the accomplishment of a storyteller, rather than the attribute of a character,'" and that "narrative is…not something achieved through some essential continuity but rather through a 'recurring *belief*' in personal coherence, a belief necessarily 'renewed in the telling of tales.'"[136] According to Steven Vertovec, identity "can suggest ways in which people conceive of themselves and are characterized by others."[137]

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[129] Tia DeNora. *Music in Everyday Life*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 62.
[130] Ibid, 62.
[131] Ibid, 62.
[132] Ibid, 63.
[133] Simon Frith. "Music and Identity," *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay. (London: Sage, 1996), 109.
[134] Ibid, 122.
[135] In his article "Funny Voices: Stories, 'Punctuation,' and Personal Identity" *New Literary History* 21 (1990), Ree draws heavily on theories of Paul Ricoeur and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Young Yun Kim, in her magisterial study on cross-cultural adaptation, describes the plurality of identity thus:

> Through prolonged experiences of trial and error, the stranger begins to "earn" a new, expanded identity that is more than either the original cultural identity or the identity of the host culture.[138]

In her conception of the evolution of identity, "there is no contradiction between maintenance of a positive cultural identity and the development of a flexible intercultural identity. The notion that a person has to choose one or the other is false.[139] For an immigrant, positioned on the cusp of past and present, adaptive mechanisms are balanced with ethnic, national and religious identifications as well as personal memories.

In the last page of his memoir, Edward Said illustrates the concept of fluid, multi-layered identity:

> I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of the solid self, the identity to which so many attach so much significance. These currents, like the themes of one's life, flow along during the waking hours, and at their best, they require no reconciling, no harmonizing. They are "off" and may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion, in time, in place, in the form of all kinds of strange

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[136] Simon Frith. "Music and Identity," *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay. (London: Sage, 1996), 122.

[137] Steven Vertovec. "Transnationalism and Identity."*Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27 (2001), 573.

[138] Young Yun Kim. *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2001), 65.

[139] Ibid, 67-68.

> combinations moving about, not necessarily forward, sometimes against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme.[140]

Thomas Turino conceptualizes identity as simultaneously "individual and social" process, calling it "the affective intersection of life experiences variably salient in any given instance."[141] He says:

> Identity is comprised of what we know best about our relations to self, others, and the world, and yet is often constituted of the things we are least able to talk about. Identity is grounded in multiple ways of knowing with affective and direct experiential knowledge often being paramount.[142]

It is those "things we are least able to talk about" that are often sidestepped in discussions on identity. They consist of the thoughts and processes that "bypass our rational mind to move us at the primal level,"[143] not having yet been cognized, processed, allotted an inner space, compartmentalized, intellectualized. The written word, visual art, music, movement, and everyday rituals involving smell, sound, taste, and the ineffable products of memory and association, all replete with symbolism, facilitate one's access to this highly subjective realm. By studying the repositories of individual narratives, I hope to gain insight into it.

Diasporic, intercultural identity is based "not on 'belongingness,' which implies either owning or being owned by a single culture, but on a style of self-consciousness that situates oneself neither totally *a part of* nor totally *apart from* a given culture."[144] Salman Rushdie expresses that state of in-betweenness -- the hallmark of immigrant experience – very simply: "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we fall between two stools."[145]

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[140] Edward Said. *Out of Place: A Memoir*. (New York: Knopf, 1999), 295.
[141] Thomas Turino. "Signs of Imagination, Identity, and Experience: A Peircian Semiotic Theory for Music." *Ethnomusicology* 43 (1999), 221.
[142] Ibid, 221.
[143] Julia Cameron. *The Vein of Gold*. (Tarcher, 1996), 116. In the original context, Cameron is describing music.

When asked to define himself, Milan Kundera responded: "If I tried, I'd end up with nothing. In my life, in everyone's life, there are hundreds of motives, hundreds of themes, and I don't know which is the important one."[146]

Edward Said has always felt "out of place," his Arab and American identities incongruous. It was only in his later years that he was able to articulate that discord and attempt to reconcile the conflicting aspects of his identity. His Anglocentric education and his being born, baptized and confirmed in the Anglican Church were in conflict with his awareness of his Non-European Other status and its attendant constituents: heritage and appearance. Said remarked that that duality forced him to play the role "at once of aggressor and aggressed against. To be at the same time a Wog and an Anglican was to be in a state of standing civil war."[147] Ruefully, he continued: "I had allowed the disparity between my acquired identity and the culture into which I was born, and from which I had been removed, to become too great."[148] The Arab-Israeli War of 1967 was

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[144] Young Yun Kim. *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation.* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2001), 65.

[145] Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991.* (London: Granta, 1992), 15.

[146] When there is no word for 'home.'" Interview with Milan Kundera. *The New York Times Review of Books.* 29 April 1984. http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/17/specials/kundera-home.html

[147] Edward Said. "Between Worlds." *London Review of Books.* 7 May 1998, 3. http://www.lrb.co.uk/v20/n09/print/said01_.html

[148] Ibid, 5.

Said's catalyst for self-examination, re-awakening his sense of Arab identity. It was, he writes, "an existential as well as a felt political need to bring one self into harmony with the other."[149] Witnessing "the suppression of a history as everyone around me celebrated Israel's victory, its terrible swift sword…at the expense of the original inhabitants of Palestine, who now found themselves forced over and over again to prove that they had once existed,"[150] Said became a passionate pro-Palestinian advocate.[151] As soon as he embraced the duality of his identity, "[he] began to think and write contrapuntally, using the disparate halves of [his] existence, as an Arab and an American, to work with and also against each other."[152]

Vladimir Nabokov yearns for the illusory America that he envisioned while living in Russia as a young man; and for his homeland that is rather a state of mind than an actual place. His nostalgia is a longing "for a space in his mind, carved out in his youth, rather than a place he later discovered as an American and can superimpose it on the imagined one."[153] In his memoir, Nabokov wrote: "The nostalgia I have been cherishing all these years is a hypertrophied sense of lost childhood, not sorrow for lost banknotes"[154] Childhood is Nabokov's Ithaca. He calls it "a veritable Eden of visual and tactile sensations," "harmonious," and "perfect."[155]

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[149] Edward Said. "Between Worlds." *London Review of Books*. 7 May 1998,6. http://www.lrb.co.uk/v20/n09/print/said01_.html.

[150] Ibid, 7.

[151] Incensed at Golda Meir statement "There are no Palestinians," made in 1969, Said embarked on "the challenge…of disproving her, of beginning to articulate a history of loss and dispossession." He continues: "I was working in an almost entirely negative element, the non-existence, the non-history which I had somehow to make visible despite occlusions, misrepresentations and denials." Ibid, 7.

[152] Ibid, 6.

[153] Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 275.

Themes of childhood and loss of innocence weave through the prose and poetry of Czesław Miłosz. In his reminiscences, childhood is transformed and mythologized by memory; it is at once embellished and streamlined by its mercurial, selective nature. The myth is superimposed on the fact; the images and impressions fuse.[156] In his autobiographical essay, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition,* Miłosz reflects:

> Knowledge does not have to be conscious. It is incredible how much of the aura of a country can penetrate to a child. Stronger than thought is an image – of dry leaves on a path, of twilight, of a heavy sky.[157]

Joseph Brodsky's prose fuses "affectionate longing and reflective estrangement." Exile and the hybrid, discordant nature of identity are prominent themes in his work. His writing style that interlaces personal retrospection with critical reflection "dwells on incompleteness and loose ends; it does not allow Brodsky to unify his past, to turn it into a melancholic work of art."[158] *Less than One,* Brodsky's collection of short stories embodies such sense of looseness, fragmentation, and conflict. Brodsky's exilic identity is crippled, rootless, suspended.[159]

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[154] Vladimir Nabokov. *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited.* (New York: Vintage International, 1989), 73.

[155] Ibid, 24.

[156] See Miłosz's semi-autobiographical novel *The Issa Valley*, *The Captive Mind*, the autobiographical essay *Native Realm*, and *The Land of Ulro,* all abounding in personal themes.

[157] Czeslaw Milosz. *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition*. Trans. Catherine S. Leach. (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1968), 45.

[158] Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001), ft. 385.

Language acts as a bonding agent within diasporic communities. Immigrants create community through the common language. By reading books and press published in their native language and engaging in social and political life of their homeland (even if only as spectators), immigrants form 'imagined communities' which rely on a cultural bond rather than a geographical one.[160] Discussing dispersed communities (she focuses on the Carribean and Jewish communities, victims of colonialism and Holocaust), Sophia Lehmann writes:

> Disparate diasporic communities are now faced with the shared struggle of articulating a cultural identity in which history and home reside in language, rather than nation, and in which language itself must be recreated so as to bespeak the specificity of cultural experience.[161]

Language is one of the tools that allow immigrants to "locate home in diaspora." It acts as an anchor, creating a foundation that transcends geography. Everyday objects and food are also used by immigrants to harness and manifest their identity in exile. Svetlana Boym sees everyday objects as "souvenir[s] of transient exilic intimacy."[162] Visiting the abodes of ex-Soviet exiles in the United States, she observes that "each home, even the most modest one, is a personal memory museum,"[163] a treasure trove of reminiscences, or memento mori of the past. Decorative and utilitarian objects, such as crafts, paintings, even crockery or table cloths act as repositories of memories and associations. Any one of these objects "could be …mass-produced…, but a memorial narrative endows [them] with an aura of singularity."[164]

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[159] Joseph Brodsky. *Less Than One*. (New York: Noonday, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986). For the analysis of metaphors of exile in Brodsky's work, see David Bethea's Joseph Brodsky and the Creation of Exile. (Princeton, N.J.: University Press, 1994).

[160] See Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. Ed. (London: Verso, 1999). Also see page 71 of this paper.

[161] Sophia Lehmann. "In Search of a Mother Tongue: Locating Home in Diaspora." *MELUS* 23 (1998), 101.

[162] Svetlana Boym. "On Diasporic Intimacy: Ilya Kabakov's Installations and Immigrant Homes." *Critical Inquiry* 24 (1998), 499.

Boym writes that many immigrants she talked to revealed that they never displayed Soviet-Russian folk art while in the Old Country "because then they seemed kitschy."[165] They long to recreate the situations and interiors that, on reflection, they remember to be unpleasant, crowded, outdated, and unattractive. But in exile, they take on a diametrically different meaning. They "do not reconstruct the narrative of one's roots but rather tell the story of exile."[166]

Andre Aciman poignantly articulates his perpetual search for the home in diaspora as he sits on a park bench in New York: "I come to Straus Park to remember Alexandria, albeit an unreal Alexandria, an Alexandria that does not exist, that I've invented, or learned to cultivate in Rome as in Paris…"[167]

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[163] Svetlana Boym. "On Diasporic Intimacy: Ilya Kabakov's Installations and Immigrant Homes." *Critical Inquiry* 24 (1998), 516.
[164] Ibid, 518.
[165] Ibid, 518.
[166] Ibid, 523.
[167] Andre Aciman. "Shadow Cities." *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language and Loss*. Ed. Andre Aciman. (New York: The New Press, 2000), 34.

> Yet I had come here, an exile from Alexandria, doing what all exiles do on impulse, which is to look for their homeland abroad, to bridge the things here to things there, to rewrite the present so as not to write off the past."[168]

Immigrants use symbols and ritual practices in an effort to maintain continuity with certain salient aspects of their 'former' (pre-emigration) selves. Labeled by Eric Hobsbawm "formal paraphernalia and ritualized practices surrounding their substantial action"[169], these include sounds, smells, sights, and material objects evocative of homeland as well as traditional occasions, religious holidays and rites of passage which are often abstracted from their original context to suit the existing cultural landscape. Herbert Gans illustrates the phenomenon by describing the Jewish minor holiday in the religious calendar, Chanukah, which has become a major one in popular practice among the Jewish diaspora in North America "partly because it lends itself to impressing Jewish identity on the children," and it enables one to channel one's nostalgic allegiance to the indigenous cultural traditions "without [its] requiring undue interference in other aspects of life."[170] The violence of emigration (even if voluntary), of a drastic geographical, social and cultural shift demands a balancing agent - the constant, the invariant.[171] In the context of a diaspora, tradition has always been negotiated. A composite of the individual and the collective, of the indigenous and the foreign, diasporic identity is a perpetually evolving entity, in a constant flux. Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined communities" as constructs of historical process and currently merely artefacts that nonetheless inspire intense sentiment is elemental to the experience of an immigrant.[172]

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[168] Andre Aciman. "Shadow Cities." *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language and Loss*. Ed. Andre Aciman. (New York: The New Press, 2000), 21.

[169] Eric Hobsbawm. "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." *The Invention of Tradition*. Ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988),3.

[170] Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity." 147.

[171] Eric Hobsbawm. "Introduction: Inventing Traditions." *The Invention of Tradition*. Ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2.

In *Swann's Way*, Proust expressed that sentiment in this way: "The memory of a particular image is but regret for a particular moment; and houses, roads, avenues are as fugitive, alas, as the years."[173]

4.2. Case One: Helmy Sherif

Helmy Sherif emigrated from Egypt as a young man during the Nasser era. Like many of his compatriots, he was a sojourner, migrating in search of educational advancement. His initial destination was the United States, where he spent the first few years pursuing graduate studies. The sojourn turned into a permanent stay when Helmy took up a teaching position at the university in Canada.[174]

After he finished his studies, two job opportunities arose that would take him back to his native realm: one was a post at the Cairo University and the other a job in Kuwait. Helmy's mother was very enthusiastic at these prospects; his taking either job would mean proximity to his family. Helmy had been in Canada for four years, having completed his Ph.D. five years before, when his colleagues at the Cairo University said: "Don't come back, things are really dire here. If you have a chance to stay there, your scientific career can take off, here it will go dead." Helmy was at a crossroads, professionally and personally. At that time, Helmy says,

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[172] Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* Rev. Ed. (London: Verso, 1999), 4.

[173] Marcel Proust,. *Swann's Way* in *Remembrance of Things Past.* Trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Random House, 1934), 462.

[174] Helmy is a professor in the Physics Department at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He has been teaching there for over 35 years.

> things were very, very bad, in many, many ways, so [the job in Egypt] didn't work out. Kuwait didn't work out because of their bureaucratic system, we just didn't agree on the terms of the contract ... I thought Egypt was really kicking, and getting to become a modern society, and things were working in that direction, and I went out to the US actually gearing to go back, because I saw I really could be doing something in Egypt, but unfortunately the politicians messed things up big, so it was impossible for me. I realized after few attempts that it would not work, so I'm not regretting [my decision to stay in Canada].[175]

I asked Helmy how significant was his Egyptianness in constituting his identity, and what role, if any, it played in his life in Canada. Helmy immediately drew a distinction between the two discrete, though not impermeable, concepts: the consciousness of being Egyptian (private) and the reciprocal relation of Egyptianness being projected to the outside world and moulded by it (public). His daily life in Canada was not greatly affected by his being an Egyptian. "In that respect," he remarked, "I am one with somebody who's from Poland, or somebody who's from Algeria..."[176]

> We all come to this place in sort of a professional garb, we come wearing a professional hat, and that's really what matters first, [only] then there is an openness on the culture, and [that is where] the individual differences emerge.[177]

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[175] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 3, 2003.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.

Helmy's elevated social status upon immigrating to Canada, his genteel manner, sartorial flair, and his light complexion had undoubtedly played a decisive role in facilitating his acculturation. Canada's "well-entrenched official commitment"[178] to multiculturalism had certainly contributed to his successful integration by laying the social and legal foundations, but it was primarily the combination of Helmy's cosmopolitan orientation and his professional status (and economic benefits thereof) that rendered his integration effortless. It was Helmy's adventurousness and adaptability that, even before his professional status, were instrumental in allowing him to easily integrate and successfully function as a member of the society. Asked to address the concept of creolization through the prism of his experience, Helmy says:

> For me it is a smooth thing, it is actually a homogenization perhaps, in a pot, and that pot is me... you take a dash of Egyptian culture and a dash of Canadian culture, and they get mixed, they get mixed. And what would come of this is me.[179]

Helmy explains that upon arriving into Canada (having had the benefit of living in the United States prior to immigrating to Canada)

> Egyptianness was not an issue to me. It was: this is a new experience, and I want to experience it, and I tend to really like that...When I go to a place I don't go like tourist, look at the tourist books. I want to be with the people, I want to be in the life itself, experience it. When I lived in France, I was almost acting like I was from France, this kind of thing. Not in any pretentious way but I was really keen about elections, and I was into the political parties, knew what was going on, and discussed with my friends from there, so I mixed in the place. In a way, I didn't even design it that way,

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[178] Ibrahim Hayani. "Arabs in Canada: Assimilation or Integration?." *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 292. Derrick Thomas observes that "Canadian national values and national identity have always been imprecise and subject to debate and compromise" and emphasizes the difficulty of "identify[ing] a set of universally accepted principles or a common conception of the public good." Thomas 1990, 1. I consider that elasticity, complexity, and inclusiveness to be hallmarks of Canadian identity.

[179] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 3, 2003.

> it's me, it's the way I am. I become, I want to experience, I want to be there. In Paris, I want to travel the countryside, you know, meet with the people, sit at cafes and I'm not doing it as a tourist, I'm doing it because this is the place for me and I want to live in it. So it is in that way that I approach Canada. Hated the weather, hated the weather with the passion when I first came here, but the rest of the... I missed Seattle, of course, quite a bit, when I first arrived here... It took a little bit of time to get used to life here, but I was in Canada. I was just being part of the place, with my characteristics, with what you might say is the Egyptian in me, a person with certain characteristics, who speaks with an accent, who has certain personality traits, but that's not the question. The fact that I was from Egypt – did it carry over in a conscious way into my experience in Canada? I don't do this because I'm Egyptian, I do this because I'm special.[180]

The concepts of cultural diversity and inclusiveness and curiosity about and engagement with the world embodied by Helmy are elements that he wants to convey to his children. Concurrently, he is delighted to witness the interest they show in Egyptian culture and Arabic language. Helmy describes this sentiment thus:

> My children are Canadian but they have certain Egyptianness. And it takes various forms...they're now beginning to really go back to speaking Arabic, which they spoke when they were very little. My oldest son is in Egypt now, he's been there for six months now, and it was his decision that he go there and learn Arabic, learn the culture, immerse himself into the Egyptian life, and that is something I am very happy about, because I wanted him to sort of get, to be like me a little bit, to have two cultures...[181]

Helmy distinguished several reasons responsible for hindering the process of integration. One is one's lack of curiosity about the world, stemming, perhaps, from limited exposure to a range of cultural experiences as a young person. The other is living in a hermetic or homogenous society for the better part of one's life -- a remote village, or a conservative, religious enclave, where social contact is limited. Among

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[180] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 11, 2003.
[181] Ibid.

Egyptian immigrants, an idea that "prevailed and may still be living over there" is parents' cautioning their children against adopting Western mores while studying abroad. Helmy elaborated:

> ...I'm not discounting the fact that one of the things that a young man going to school Europe will be warned about will be not to marry a European girl or come back with her -- that will be the advice from the parents. ...And there are, for example, Egyptian graduate students on campus who stayed really very religious and very protective, afraid of other religions. They are here to study and go back quickly. Or study and stay but stay in a religious group that will protect them. So we have that as well, and so... it depends what you come with, and it also depends on the age [of emigration]...[182]

Helmy remarked how much he looked forward to his unrestrained social life in the United States: "...that is the great place, you know, this thing about not being able to hold hands with the girl on the campus of the University of Cairo... it is banned, [but] you can do that here."[183]

The fluidity of negotiating the old and the new, the traditional and the modern, and the religious and the secular, is emblematic of Egyptian immigrant experience generally. Helmy's negotiating his Egyptianness between the public and private spheres resembled two intertwined realms, each complementing the other. Helmy's 'private' sense of Egyptianness, the one that is not readily observable, forms a cornerstone of his identity. He says:

> My Egyptianness is with me, and it stays. It's not going anywhere. It is not something I would...lose, or I would sort of trade, you know, for becoming Westernized, if you wish... I [can] be Canadian, I [can] be comfortable living here..., I [could] be doing what the average Canadian probably does, and maybe even more in terms of his daily activity, if you wish. If I like something I'll do it, I'll take it. But still, I'm an Egyptian. When I go home, I

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[182] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 3, 2003.
[183] Ibid.

> sit with my family or I sit with my friends, or I go visit my village, I'm back and I'm smoothly transitioning into this, I go back to what was.[184]

Helmy partly attributes the strength with which he identifies with his Egyptianness to the fact that he left Egypt in his early twenties -- when he was an already fully formed being.

I asked Helmy what symbols, objects or phenomena, he uses to uphold his Egyptianness. He mentioned art (including crafts and souvenirs), clothes (the Egyptian cotton undershirt he wears is his private tribute to his Egyptianness), Egyptian literature, and music (he brings books and music tapes back from Egypt). Knowing that in modern Egypt "music figured prominently in the economics and aesthetics of all radio and audiovisual media,"[185] I asked what *kind* of music (genre, performer, etc.) he listened to.

He liked the performers and poets that he listened to in Egypt during the two decades of his life: Umm Kulthum, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, 'Abd al-Halim Hafiz, and Farid Al-Atrash. He even occasionally put on a tape of Qur'anic recitation.

Umm Kulthum is perhaps the most renowned of all Egyptian performing artists and is mentioned by everybody I speak to. Schooled in the tradition of Qur'anic cantillation by her father as a young girl, her adult repertoire ranged from the free-metered and improvisatory *qasa'id,*[186] often composed in collaboration with Riyad al-Sunbati, who was regarded as an authentically Egyptian composer and a custodian of the classical Arabic tradition, to *ughniyyah,* a syncretic genre she established jointly with 'Abd al-Wahhab. 'Abd al-Wahhab is said to have defined the style of modern Arabic music by synthesizing Western and Middle Eastern cultures.[187] While he was only one out of many remarkable contributors to the genre of *ughniyyah*, he was certainly the most progressive. The use of well-tempered scale, harmony, and juxtaposition of musical styles were distinguishing factors in his compositions and constituted just some of the avenues of innovation he explored. Despite the fact that al-Wahhab retained the fundamental elements of indigenous Arabic music such as the quarter-tone system, monophony, and *maqamat*[188], his excursions into the Western musical territory and adoption of its stylistic elements earned him severe criticism in Egypt. That criticism came from traditionalists who feared that the "overbearing and frequently unwelcome presence of an alien tradition"[189] would lead to eventual eradication of indigenous values. Despite mixed reviews, al-Wahhab's *aghani* acquired

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[184] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 3, 2003.

[185] Walter Armbrust. "The Impact of the Media on Egyptian Music." *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol. 6 (Middle East)." Eds.Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus and Dwight Reynolds. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 233. Armbrust writes: "Modernists and political elites have always dreamed of reaching illiterates through audiovisual media. In Egypt music has functioned as a "honey pot," enticing audiences into unfamiliar media terrain. Through the gramophone, music reached mass audiences before other audiovisual content. The radio brought music into homes. Early filmmakers capitalized on preexisting audiences by casting singing stars in their films. At the beginning of the twentieth century music helped create readers…" Ibid, 233. Of course, it is not only illiterates that found the media of radio and television captivating and music popularized by them memorable. Media marketed many an accomplished star, such as Umm Kulthum or Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab', who became audience favorites across social and educational strata. For more on the four stars of Arab music: Sayyid

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Darwish, Umm Kulthum, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, 'Abd al-Halim Hafiz, see Virginia Danielson. "Stardom in Egyptian Music: Four Case Studies." (1998)

[186] Singular, *qasidah.* It is a vocal genre which, with its emphasis on clarity of articulation, is a natural vehicle for the presentation of elements fundamental to Qur'anic recitation.

[187] Walter Armbrust, *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996), 64. Armbrust devotes an entire chapter of his book to al-Wahhab, an ambiguous figure in his own time, today revered as "a giant," "a river into which all tributaries flow."

[188] *Maqam* (pl. *maqamat*) and *iqa* (pl. *iqa'at*) are Arabic terms for melodic mode and rhythmic mode, respectively.

[189] Walter Armbrust, *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996), 91.

immense popularity, enjoyed commercial success and "penetrated cultural expression" in Egypt.[190] Popular *aghani* of al-Wahhab became a vehicle for a revolutionary change in Arab music. By assimilating Western musical models in his compositions he thrust Egyptian music into new contexts of television and cinema thus giving his countrymen modernized national identity. *Ughniyyah* acted as manifesto of creative freedom while demonstrating that the need for modernization can be reconciled with the importance of indigenous values. *Ughniyyah* became symbolic of "smooth transition to Western-influenced modernity while maintaining Arab authenticity."[191]

The most important criterion Helmy placed on his musical selections was that they be reminiscent of Egypt; *his* Egypt, reflecting his experiences, providing a soundtrack to them. His tastes, in Arabic music at least, did not evolve; they were suspended in time, and remained intact. Every note of the song evoked particular memories, and that did not change with time spent away from Egypt.

When I inquired what symbols are most evocative of Egyptianness to him, he listed *ful medames* (the material) and *shahama* (the immaterial). With great affection, he began outlining the cultural significance of *ful medames* and his own nostalgic attachment to it.

> Food is part of your Egyptianness, the discovery… the dawning of the times when Egyptian food showed up on the markets in the US or in Canada... We eat, for example, a kind of beans for breakfast, fava beans, called *medames* -- you may have heard the word – and, of course, coming to Seattle, there was no such thing, but when we discovered that it is already in Seattle, this was a

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[190] Virginia Danielson. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 177.

[191] Walter Armbrust, *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1996), 64.

> great thing for us. "Ah, now, we can eat this for breakfast." This is a very important symbol of Egyptian life, eating this bean for breakfast...All families in Egypt, maybe more then than now, would have that food for breakfast. This would be their food for breakfast every day in Egypt, you see.[192]

Food is a common and effective memory trigger. It is a culinary archive of experience. It mediates between past and present and like everyday objects, it takes a different significance in exile. Claudia Roden, a renowned cookbook writer, recalls the time when she was a young girl living in Paris, and was invited every Sunday by her relatives for *ful medames* (cooked fava beans with spices, which is a staple of Egyptian food). She writes:

> This meal became a ritual. Considered in Egypt to be a poor man's dish, in Paris the little brown beans became invested with all the glories and warmth of Cairo, our hometown, and the embodiment of all that for which we were homesick.[193]

Roden emigrated to London with her parents soon after Egypt's 1956 war with Israel. "At 16 Woodstock Road," Roden writes, "it seemed that we had never left Cairo. The smell of sizzling garlic and crushed coriander seeds in the kitchen, or of rose water in a pudding, and my mother daily meals, reinforced the feeling."[194]

Considering the concept and the meaning of *shahama*, he became wistful, and with increasing tenderness, he began:

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[192] Interview with Helmy Sharif, April 11, 2003.

[193] Claudia Roden. *A New Book of Middle Eastern Food.* (New York: Random House, 1974), 1. Roden's cookbooks are more than just collections of recipes; they situate the food within the broader cultural context. They are also works of historical and ethnographic scholarship of great depth and eloquence and include personal reminiscences and anecdotes.

[194] Claudia Roden. *The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand and Vilna to the Present Day.* (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 3.

> The way the Egyptians carry themselves, their feelings, the touch -- and that is perhaps more of an individual thing -- the touch is that really 'gets' you and reminds you of Egypt, and you say, "aha, now this is like what we had in Egypt." For example, in Egypt -- and it goes back to old times -- they are always extolling the virtues of being a high plain human being, in terms of your willingness to help others. This is a very important thing in the culture ... -- they call it *shahama* in Arabic – and the word *shahama* means willingness to be there in support of others when they need it. The fact that you sacrifice of yourself to others, that you do extend helping hand when it is needed – it is... to me it's a very important word, and when you see instances of this kind, it kind of brings Egypt back immediately, and it is something that when I go to Egypt and I live there and I see, even though there are difficulties in the society ...but you still glimpse at that thing and you say: "yes, that's Egypt." I don't know whether I told you about my son, Ali, he went riding on the metro, did I tell you about this incident? [195]

He did not, so I asked him to tell me now. He smiled warmly and commenced:

> This last summer we were going to visit a relative of my wife and we were taking a metro from one part of Cairo to the other, and one of the trains was missed its schedule, so the next train was very crowded, so we were standing. And we have bought her a piece of, a box of dessert, and it was wrapped and the string, so I was carrying it. Because it was very crowded I was standing there, my wife behind me, and my son next to me, and I was holding it, trying to prevent it from tipping because it will mix the [pastries]. [I was] holding it very carefully. And there was this man sitting on the train, and he was right in front of me – I was standing and he was sitting right on front of me. He was wearing this *gulabiyya* – the long, white robe – very neat and clean with the head cover - he was sitting there, a simple man, but when he saw this, he said: "Let me take that for you." and he took it in his hand and put it on his lap. Now, you would want to worry about this neat, clean *gulabiyya* now, but he's holding it, protecting his *gulabiyya* and sitting there, and I leaned to my son and said: "This is Egypt, this is the real Egypt."[196]

Helmy was elated that his son was there to witness the generous, kind nature of the Egyptians. Helmy has four brothers, and one sister in Cairo, and one sister lives some distance from Cairo, and, he says "it just always kind of hits me that that's us, that's Egypt." Anytime he is in Cairo, they rearrange their schedules just to see him: "anytime you're ready, we're there, just tell us what your schedule is."[197]

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[195] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 11, 2003.

[196] Ibid, 2003.

[197] Ibid.

The *shahama* represents Egypt. Qualities of openness, selflessness and spontaneity trigger memories of Egypt and in Helmy's mind are indelibly associated with Egyptianness. Helmy's affection for Egypt is palpable. When he speaks of Egypt, it is as if he were referring to a living entity, flawed and wonderful, transcending categories of good and bad, awesome in its complexity. That prompts my asking whether he idealizes Egypt. He responds with an unequivocal 'no.'

> When I think of Egypt, the whole thing is there: there are corrupt politicians, polluted place, the crowded Cairo, problems of the countryside, the poor people. All of this is on my mind. I sympathize very much and feel sorry that I can't do anything about what's happening to education in Egypt and poverty and health system – all of this is there, the facts are there. But I also do keep and cherish and still am aware of the good things there, the little things and the big good things, the fact that we have some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, that we have people that I love and their dignity and their courageous existence under the circumstances, something I admire very much. Their *shahama* – that character, generosity, and ability to help others is still there in my mind. What I call *asala*, which is originality of spirit that is there, which is something that they have, and it is something I think of and that's the Egypt that I knew, so it is in my mind, it's the mix of all the positives and the negatives as well…there is no utopia in my mind that I could say I'm carrying with me.[198]

In my research on patterns on immigration among Egyptians, I discovered that Egyptians, in contrast to their regional neighbours, do not readily migrate.[199] And while the second half of the twentieth century witnessed the surge of migration into oil-rich states of the Gulf and the advent of the North American immigration, the overall pattern of Egyptian migration can be characterized as a steady trickle. What accounts for the Egyptians' reluctance to migrate? Helmy offered the following analysis:

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[198] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 11, 2003.
[199] See Chapter 2 of this thesis.

> I think … there is something about the Nile, the valley of the Nile, that it is really like the bloodstream of the Egyptian civilization and the Egyptian existence, and …until today Egyptians exist around the river Nile. Egypt… especially in [its] early history was a very rich country, and until recently the Nile provided for everyone, unlike, for example…Lebanon, where…[resources were scarce] so that the Lebanese had to go some place else. There is a saying that goes, an old saying that I learned when I was very young: "Egypt is a gift of the Nile." But also, you grow up with very strong bonds in families, and the agrarian society was still the dominant society in Egypt when I was growing up. Still, the majority of Egyptians live in the countryside, still farm around the land of the Nile. So, you grow up in the village, you take over the farm from parents, and continue to farm. So it is ingrained in the Egyptian culture not to move away from your place, and the Nile valley is the Egyptian place and the people are very reluctant to leave.[200]

Helmy explains that some family members, mostly men, would emigrate to obtain education, then return to the village and work as a teacher in the village school, for instance. Generally, "there was this reluctance of families to let go of their children, to let them go far away."

Young people are more inclined to leave Egypt, yet the traditional trappings of their upbringing combined with the dire economic situation in Egypt, prevent them from emigrating. Helmy's mother, until the day she died, was still hopeful that one day he would return. These days, economic pressure forces families to yield and permit their children to leave. The difficulty of obtaining visa (Helmy: "30 years ago they could get their visa in maybe 4 months; now they have to wait years") and high cost of airfare and accommodation while abroad continue to be insurmountable obstacles for many.

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[200] Interview with Helmy Sherif, April 11, 2003.

4.3. Case two: Fikry Rizkalla

Fikry Rizkalla is a retired structural engineer in his 70s. I was introduced to him courtesy of Helmy Sherif, a longtime friend of Fikry. Fikry was raised in a Coptic family, labels himself a Copt, and belongs to the local Coptic church. He emigrated to Canada from Egypt in 1969 with an explicit purpose of obtaining a masters degree in engineering from the University of Calgary. He was not escaping persecution, was not migrating for economic reasons (though aside from superior education and equal opportunity in employment, the relocation undoubtedly led to economic prosperity), and was keenly aware of key aspects of Canadian reality. Thus prepared, and excited at the prospect of embarking on an academic journey, he assimilated quite easily, and now considers Canada "home." In the same breath, however, he says he has "Egypt in his veins," he travels to Egypt almost every year, reads Arabic press, and is very proud of his Egyptian heritage. Following that thread, I posed the series of related questions: " How do you define yourself – by ethnicity, by social status, by ideology you subscribe to…?", "Is your identity tied to your Egyptiannes, your Arab heritage?", "How do you assert, express, your identity?" Fikry responded with exasperation. He regards labels as useless; to him, my attempts at compartmentalization, at placing aspects of his experience into a rigid "Egyptian immigrant" matrix were a futile exercise in finding categories for phenomena that, according to him, could not be classified.

According to Fikry, most Egyptians did not have the agency in making a decision to migrate. Explicitly, of course, they sold the possessions and bought the ticket, they were not forcibly resettled. Implicitly, however, the decision had its genesis in the sociopolitical climate of their times and the course of world history – articulating a desire to leave and purchasing tickets are merely external manifestations of the decision that was a long time in the making. That is why he saw the path of "personal histories" I was pursuing as treacherous, the method lacking in rigor, and results flimsy and uninformative. He noted that all Egyptians share similar experiences by the virtue of being from the same place; the fact that now they interpret their condition as individuals does not unveil the (objective) reality of the basis of their experience.

Fikry considers geographical boundaries permeable and ideological pluralism a product of that. A world in which categories overlap, in which cultural references collide, is the world Fikry inhabits. He credits diasporism, globalization, nomadism with countering dogmatic or fanatical nationalism, and blames nationalism, religion, ethnocentricity, nostalgia and patriotism with exacerbating, and often initiating, national conflict. My queries about symbols used to uphold Egyptianness (appropriate since he clearly articulated his attachment to the homeland) were met with the dismissal of them as contributing to such conflicts. According to Fikry, expressing attachment through symbols such as music, literature, mannerisms, or attire, only broadened the chasm between cultures as it elevated your culture, your nationality above all others and accentuated differences instead of focusing on commonalities. Undoubtedly, in words of Eva Hoffman, there comes a strength "from the gathering of experiences so that they add up to memories"[201] and form an anchor, a center, a point of departure to evolve from, and symbols act as reminders of belonging. For Fikry, however, symbols foster nostalgia and perpetuate psychic split. Svetlana Boym writes that nostalgia is less memory than fantasy. It is, according to her, an idealization of the past that can demean the present and hold it hostage. She argues we're besotted with nostalgia, plagued with it. It is "a marketing miracle", a "dictator's dream," which can lend a sentimental alloy to nationalism and a rosy hue to group hatred.[202] Fikry allows for wistfulness, for sentiment, for memory, but to him it is an intensely private ritual which expresses his identity as a person, not as an Egyptian or a Copt.

Lois T. Keck observes a "development of two distinct ethnic groups, the Coptic Orthodox and the Muslim," on the North American firmament and argues that the schism is "brought about not by reason of different values in such fundamental areas as marriage and divorce but by a conscious social distancing between the segments in the group."[203] Among my interviewees, and as far as I had been able to discern during my time living and working in Edmonton, among the Egyptian diaspora at large, there was no consciously created chasm. In the case of Fikry, religion had certainly not figured prominently as part of his identity; he was open toward other religions, and often discussed religious and spiritual matters with Helmy, a Muslim.

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[201] Eva Hoffman. *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*. (New York: Penguin, 1989), 57.
[202] Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xv.
[203] Lois T. Keck. "Egyptian Americans in the Washington, DC Area." *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change*. Eds. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 122.

Fikry, similarly to Helmy, listens to the type of music he remembers from Egypt -- Umm Kulthum and ‘Abd al-Wahhab mostly -- though in our conversation he did not underscore the importance of music in his life and addressed my questions about music only perfunctorily.

4.4. Case Three: Magda Salama

Magda Salama works at the library of the Faculté Saint Jean, the Francophone branch of the University of Alberta. Soft-spoken and poised, she answers my questions but does not engage in a discussion. We only have the duration of her lunch hour for this interview. Magda, like most Egyptians, is educated, speaks foreign languages, and is, at least outwardly, thoroughly Westernized. The symbols she uses to uphold her identity in exile include language (spoken and read), decorative and utilitarian objects evocative of places and phenomena, and music. Her musical tastes range from Umm Kulthum, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab, ‘Abd al-Halim Hafiz, and the oud virtuoso Farid Al-Atrash to contemporary singers Aïcha Redouane and Fairuz. Aïcha Redouane was born in 1962 in Morocco (currently lives in France) and like Umm Kulthum, began to sing at a young age at various social functions. Also like Kulthum, she was trained in Qur’anic cantillation and specializes in the style of Arab art music, often performing the classical genres of *qasa’id, wasla, muwashshah, taqasim, layali, and dawr*. In fact, she is credited with fostering Umm Kulthum’s legacy of high art song. While Redouane represents tradition and attracts an audience of classical song cognoscenti, Fairuz, born in Lebanon, is a world-renowned popular music singer, whose distinct, dolorous vocal timbre and lyrics of romantic love and patriotic fervour attract an enormous following in the Arab world and beyond. Magda's eclectic choices illustrate the common occurrence among immigrants: the most important criterion for musical selection is association of it with a place, time, or sentiment.

Magda travels to Egypt frequently. In her case, as in the case of Helmy or Fikry, these periodic visits strengthen her bond with Egypt, reinvigorating her sense of Egyptian identity.

Among the first-generation immigrants, Magda is the only woman I interviewed. Her independence, keen intellect, knowledge of languages, as well as her manner attest to her ability to adapt to and thrive in a new environment. Michael Suleiman observes that Arab immigrant women "have had more problems than their male counterparts in defining an acceptable or comfortable identity."[204] Women from traditional backgrounds often lack the necessary prerequisites to successfully integrate into the society: they do not know the language, are not adequately educated, and are unfamiliar with American customs. Even the inability to operate a vehicle is an impediment in their new surroundings. Consequently, they are "much more isolated than they were back home, where they often had a vibrant and full life, albeit within the confines of the family and female friends."[205]

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[204] Michael W. Suleiman. "Introduction: The Arab Immigrant Experience." *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 14.
[205] Ibid, 14.

Egyptian immigrant women do not fit the profile of disengaged and marginalized misfit for several reasons. They are mostly middle-class, are better educated and thus more qualified for more fulfilling and lucrative jobs, and "they usually follow the somewhat more liberal mores they brought with them from the old homeland."[206] That profile adequately describes Magda.

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[206] Michael W. Suleiman. "Introduction: The Arab Immigrant Experience." ***Arabs in America: Building a New Future***. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 14.

Chapter 5

Case studies: children of the first-generation Egyptian immigrants.

5.1. Cases four and five: Mohamed and Marwa Salama

Egyptians have long been grappling with the contrasting values of tradition and modernity, indigenousness and Westernization, and Islam and secularism. Many contemporary Egyptian immigrants and Canadians of Egyptian ancestry, therefore, have cultivated the ability to seamlessly negotiate their dual identities. For the children of the first-generation immigrants I interviewed, that duality is second nature.

In this chapter, I will present stories of twins Mohamed and Marwa Salama and Gamal Abdel-Shehid. In contrast to the Salamas, who are Canadian-born, Gamal was born in Alexandria, but because he immigrated to Canada with his parents at the tender age of 2,5, I decided to include him in the second-generation category.

Born in Canada of Egyptian parents, Mohamed and Marwa Salama fluidly negotiate their Canadian and Egyptian identities. Their identities are a patchwork, an intertwined entity – the two overlap, each surfacing at different points, depending on a circumstance, but always in equilibrium. Their memories, unlike those of first generation immigrants, lack the underpinnings of the notion of a home (change, modernization, conflict) and underscore the elements which serve as source of comfort, individuality, and a sense of belonging. Marwa and Mohamed do not have to rely on the idealized notion of home for emotional foundation, for identification. Grounded in Canadian reality, the only permanent home they know is here; they are much more familiar with the Canadian social structures than Egyptian; and most of the momentous events in their lives occurred in Canada. Egypt represents a parallel world -- it invests them with a sense of belonging to an elite group, and gives them a sense of pride at being a part of the ancient heritage. Returning from Egypt, for instance, they are imbued with a feeling of belonging to a distinct group, memories and associations rendered tangible by having lived there.

In their study on the native language retention among second generation immigrants, Alejandro Portes and Lingxin Hao conclude that among most immigrant nationalities, knowledge of and preference for the local language is ubiquitous—only a small minority retains fluency in their parents' language. According to the authors, the first-generation immigrants generally acquire only as much knowledge of the English language as they deem adequate to carry out their jobs and daily routines, retaining full fluency in their native language. The second-generation immigrants speak their native language at home, with varying degrees of fluency, switching to English at work or in certain social situations. Among the third-generation immigrants, the knowledge of the native language atrophies, and English becomes their main (often 'native') language.[207]

Marwa and Mohamed fall somewhere between the categories of second and third generation immigrants while Gamal fits squarely into the latter category. The siblings, loath to stand out, resisted speaking Arabic while growing up. But hearing their parents speak, watching the Arabic television, listening to the lyrics of Arabic songs, and visiting Egypt regularly allowed them to maintain a link to the language and learn a lot of it by osmosis. Still, if they could speak it moderately well and could certainly comprehend it, they were reluctant to demonstrate it, preferring instead to blend in, linguistically and culturally, amongst their Canadian peers. Recently, Marwa and Mohamed had begun taking formal lessons in Arabic, and Mohammed joined, and actively participated in, a university course on the politics of the Middle East. The surge in their interest in a wide range of issues surrounding their heritage had been spurred by a confluence of several factors. Firstly, leaving the rigid social confines of the secondary school's peer system for the expansive vistas of the university experience broadened their horizons, encouraging them to delve into their own history and assert their uniqueness as individuals and as Egyptians. Secondly, the advent of the terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 and the resulting tide of the general public's interest into the Arab world, had awakened Mohamed's and Marwa's sense of Arab and Muslim identity.

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[207] Alejandro Portes and Lingxin Hao. "The Price of Uniformity: Language, Family and Personality Adjustment in the Immigrant Second Generation." *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 25 (2002), 889-913.

Lila Fahlman's research into perceptions surrounding assimilation among Lebanese Muslim students conducted at two Edmonton high schools revealed that "students in both high schools express themselves strongly against assimilation, saying they are individuals as against conformists, and they want to retain their integrity."[208] Such resistance to integration may be a product of a strict, traditional upbringing in which the fostering of traditional values and beliefs precluded the simultaneous adoption of new ones. It may also be a result of a gradual coming to terms with one's background and acknowledging and embracing it. Marwa and Mohammed have arrived at the latter juncture.

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[208] Lila Fahlman. "Culture Conflict in the Classroom: An Edmonton Survey." *The Muslim Community in North America*. Eds. Earle H. Waugh et al. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983), 208.

Until recently, Marwa's and Mohammed's trajectory of ethnic identity appeared to unfold along the lines outlined by Derrick Thomas in the following passage:

> Most ethnic groups, after several generations in Canada, are able to preserve only an affective [symbolic] identity... They become even less residentially segregated, they cease to speak the ethnic language, they are no longer involved in the ethnic community and they feel less social distance from other groups.[209]

Upbringing in a household where symbols such as Qur'an and depictions of Egypt in literature and art surrounded them shaped their sense of identity. Insidiously, religion and tradition made their way into their psyche. Restriction on eating pork, once an unwelcome obstacle, is now embraced. Learning Arabic, once resisted, is now wholeheartedly enjoyed. Muslim faith and its earthly manifestations are becoming a potent force in Marwa's life. Marrying a Muslim, for instance, is an increasingly attractive option for Marwa, not least because of her desire to preserve tradition. These elements render Mohammed and Marwa privy to the "other" realm, forming a sort of a bridge, expanding their identity.

Marwa and Mohammed epitomize the concept of creolization -- they flit effortlessly between distinct cultural and linguistic realms, equally at home in each. Having managed to carve out a comfortable social niche as Canadians, they have maintained the distinctions of separate cultural provenance, nationhood, and ethnicity as Egyptians. They are integrated rather than fully assimilated. Derrick Thomas delineates the difference between integration and assimilation in the following passage:

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[209] Derrick Thomas. *Immigrant Integration and the Canadian Identity*. Strategic Planning & Research, Immigration Policy Branch. (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, 1990), 21-22.

> Integration is viewed as a bi-directional process involving accommodation and adjustment on the part of both migrants and the host society. It is distinguished from assimilation which implies the complete absorption of the migrant minority into the dominant culture or society.[210]

Similarly, Young Yun Kim sees cross-cultural adaptation as a complex, multi-directional process. She explains:

> Adaptation in the new environment is not a process in which new cultural elements are simply added to prior internal conditions. As new learning occurs, *deculturation* (or unlearning) of at least some of the old cultural elements has to occur, in the sense that the new responses are adopted in situations that preciously would have evoked old ones.[211]

The pioneer immigrants focused on assimilation rather than on integrating *while* preserving their cultural uniqueness. With their heritage stigmatized, maligned, and misunderstood, immigrants opted for immersion, mainly in order to facilitate their children's assimilation and help prevent ethno-cultural identity crisis. Michael W. Suleiman and Baha Abu-Laban write that

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[210] Derrick Thomas. *Immigrant Integration and the Canadian Identity*. Strategic Planning & Research, Immigration Policy Branch. (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, 1990), 1.
[211] Young Yun Kim. *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2001), 51.

> as the children grew up immersed in American society and culture while simultaneously exposed to a smattering of Arabic words at home and some Arabic food and music, they often found themselves experiencing an identity crisis of some kind, mainly resulting in rootlessness, ambiguity, and a fractionalized personality.[212]

Marwa and Mohammed seem not to have experienced the identity crisis of the kind outlined above. They have certainly grappled with certain contrasting values and traditions that may have hinted at ambiguity, but they have not experienced a chasm separating their dual (or multiple) Canadian and Egyptian (or Arab) identities, and its attendant feelings of rootlessness or fragmentation. They negotiated their multiple selves with the fluidity symptomatic of the later generations of immigrants.

Listening to songs they heard while in Egypt provides the link to their heritage, represents uniqueness, aids in expressing the layered identity. Marwa enjoys many musical genres – Arabic pop is just one of them. She mainly listens to Lebanese pop music (prefers female vocalists to male ones), but responds to any Arabic ingredient (or what she identifies as Arabic) contained in a musical piece, be it a *maqam* (see chapter 3) she recognizes from the old recordings her parents played when she was a child or associates with travels in Egypt, an instrument, a rhythmic pattern, or an Arabic phrase. Shakira, a Colombian Latino/Anglo-Pop crossover artist of Lebanese ancestry on which she draws quite heavily in her music and her videos, employs all of these elements in her music. She is one of Marwa's favorite performers.

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[212] Michael W. Suleiman and Baha Abu-Laban. "Introduction." *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change.* Eds. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 12.

Mohamed likes house, hip-hop, turntablism, but appreciates other genres. He values musical pluralism, syncretism, and considers conceptual and production value as important as textual and musical content. As in Marwa's case, Egyptian music has a narrow niche in Mohamed's musical universe. It plays a significant role primarily because of its origin and relevant associations. For instance, Mohamed does not regard the Egyptian musical scene as sufficiently progressive and inclusive. To him, it lacks the experimental and syncretic qualities. In fact, he resents the homogeneity of the Egyptian music scene, its lack of diversity, its conformity to one tired model. Even though he steers clear of mainstream pop in Canada (where he has many musical choices as a listener), in Egypt he will listen to Amr Diab, a popular music star. In Canada, the sounds of Amr Diab will evoke memories, prompt associations, and therefore have a tremendous appeal. It is interesting to note that the music played in their household mainly falls under the rubric of classical Arabic song. Exposure to performers such as Umm Kulthum, Mohamed 'Abd al-Wahhab, and Farid al-Atrash, and Aïcha Redouane, did not lead to Mohammed and Marwa's attraction to their repertoire from the musical, or even textual perspective. They do, however, recognize its potent symbolism as precious relic of their past.

5.2. Case six: Gamal Abdel-Shehid

Gamal is an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta, specializing in cultural studies. He is also a political activist who heads the University of Alberta's Committee Against War and Racism. Despite growing up in an Arabic-speaking household, does speaks little Arabic, his first language. Like Mohamed and Marwa, he spoke English with his peers while growing up. Unlike them, he has now lived away from his parents, his sole conduits of Arabic, for over two decades. Gamal still remembers some words and fragmented phrases in Arabic, but he has not taken the step to learn the language properly. When he was a child, Gamal's mother insisted that they go to church as a family every Sunday. That was her way of sustaining the tradition. I noted with some surprise that the mere act of attending church regularly was more important to her than fostering Coptic ritual. Gamal explains:

> We were Coptic Christians, but we never went to church *(laughs)*, because the church was so far away, and my father hated religion, and he thought it was all a big scam, and he was probably right, but my mother felt…she grew up differently and wanted to be in the church. The last thing my father wanted to do on Sunday morning, and he was an auto worker, was to drive an hour to church. So we only went to church at Easter and Christmas, or some other rituals, so then, instead, we went to this pentecostal church because there was a bus! *(he laughs)*[213]

Attending the pentecostal church coalesced Gamal's identification as a black man, "because it was black church." He said:

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[213] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.

> I mean, the white folks ran the church - but everybody else was black. And black from all parts of the Caribbean, black Caribbean. If you go to Trinidad, there's a ton of pentecostal churches. So we did that until a church was built near our house, until I was, like, 16 or 17.[214]

Once the church was built, Gamal's mother visited it, and returned ecstatic to have discovered an Egyptian Coptic youth group housed within it. "So we joined," Gamal says without much enthusiasm and adds with some culpability in his voice, "my brother was more… he was better at it than me, he felt easier around Egyptians than me, it's taken me a while to switch…"[215]

While Gamal's sense of ethnic identity does not centre on his Egyptian or Coptic background, it does revolve around his Arab and African heritage. Gamal may not be actively involved in the Egyptian community, speak Arabic, or even classify himself as an Egyptian first and foremost, but he does identify strongly with a community of *minorities,* particularly the blacks and the Arabs. For him, it is the assertion of personal identity as much as it is a political and social statement.

Eric Hobsbawm's concept of "invented tradition," which he defines as

> a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past [216]

serves as an axis amidst the shifting components of identity, providing the equilibrium.

Arjun Appadurai explores the idea in the context of globalization:

> These landscapes thus are the building blocks of what (extending Benedict Anderson) I would like to call *imagined worlds,* that is, the multiple worlds

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[214] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Derrick Thomas. *Immigrant Integration and the Canadian Identity*. Strategic Planning & Research, Immigration Policy Branch. (Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, 1990), 1.

> that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe. An important fact of the world we live in today is that many persons on the globe live in such imagined worlds (and not just in imagined communities) and thus are able to contest and sometimes even subvert the imagined worlds of the official mind and of the entrepreneurial mentality that surround them.[217]

Members of the post-war Arab diaspora tended to downplay their ethnic heritage in the attempt to facilitate their integration. In the face of "increasingly virulent anti-Arab, anti-Muslim rhetoric (prevalent in North America at least since the oil embargo of 1973) found in school curricula, church-school materials, the print media, television, radio, and film,"[218] many Arab immigrants, particularly those enjoying the privileges associated with their economic or professional status, favored remaining inconspicuous. Their ethnic identity was a fluid entity, subject to modification depending on a global political climate. It was a card they played, asserting their ethnic background when it appeared advantageous to do so, and marginalizing or diluting it when the anti-Arab sentiments surged.[219] McIrvin writes that it was "the Egyptians, many of them light-skinned, fluent in English, Westernized and secular, [who] found it much easier to adapt and blend in when necessary."[220] That statement certainly applies to Helmy, a fair-skinned, educated, Westernized man. Gamal, however, emerged from quite a different milieu. Firstly, Gamal's father was a dark-skinned auto mechanic; and secondly, Gamal grew up in the ethnically diverse but conflict-ridden suburb of Toronto during a time of significant racial and ethnic tensions in Canada. Discrimination on the basis of national origin was only completely abolished in the 1967, with the publication of the amended version of Canada's Immigration Act. And although the Canadian government has been gradually implementing increasingly more liberal immigration regulations since the end of the WWII, it was only in 1962 and 1967 that the "further regulations designed to reduce discrimination on the basis of race or national origin were passed…bringing nearly 4.000.000 immigrants in the period 1946-1975."[221]

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[217] Arjun Appadurai. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 33.

[218] Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban. "The Coexistence of Cohorts: Identity and Adaptation among Arab-American Muslims." *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change*. Eds. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 54.

[219] Ibid.

[220] Ibid, 55.

Reflecting on his experiences as a representative of the visible minority group in Brampton, Ontario in the early 1970s, Gamal says:

> Multiculturalism is more a myth than anything else. I think that in the early 70s it was just starting, and the reason that the Trudeau government passed the multicultural legislation was because there were a lot of immigrant communities who were really pissed off, they weren't really allowed to participate in the society. They were working, they were paying taxes, they were citizens, yet they were disenfranchised from the political party, and they still are! Look at the city hall! In that sense, multiculturalism… and not only that, there was a serious amount of racial depression, racism toward people largely south Asian, largely black, in places like Ontario, Montreal, etc. There was a pressure to conform, fair bit of harassment, like someone once threw a thing that was on fire through our mail slot in our building, and there was a group of white kids running around doing that, you know, violence in schoolyards, etc., etc. My brother faced a lot of that. Because he wasn't tough enough he would get beaten up. It's common, but it was overlaid by the fact that he wasn't a white kid. He hung out with those kids who were south Asian, Yugoslavian, and he had a little gang. I felt I had to be stronger to protect him, which was kind of a role reversal because he was my older brother, but I didn't want to see anybody do that, so I felt I had to protect him. In that sense, growing up was interesting because my best friends – one was Chinese-Canadian, one was from Trinidad, and my brother's friends, one

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[221] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1980), 56-57.

> was Yugoslavian and 2 were Bengalis. And in that sense, on the ground, it was kind of multicultural.[222]

In the culture of negative stereotyping of the people of color or of 'Eastern' descent, many Arabs elected to assimilate in order to evade discrimination. Media, both print and visual, played a significant role in disseminating the negative stereotypes of the 'Eastern peoples.' Hayani comments on the legacy of that culture:

> Canadians tend to associate Arabs with images they derive from the media, and these have been largely negative. In the minds of many, "Arab" and "Muslim" have become associated with violence, brutality, terrorism, and fanaticism.[223]

Immigrants would speak English to their children and encourage their participation in the society in the attempt to facilitate their entrance into the realm that, perhaps, the parents themselves could not gain an easy entry into.[224] Of course, even those who encountered relatively few obstacles immigrating to Canada and integrated into the new surroundings readily (such as my Egyptian interviewees), took steps to ease any potential impediment for their children, such as speaking to them in English and encouraging their integration into the Canadian society. And while the negative stereotyping of the 'Eastern' peoples has affected Arabs from all strata of society, certain parts of Canada, at various times, had been subject to disproportionate share of discrimination. Gamal's childhood and youth, for instance, spent against the backdrop of ethnic and racial strife, had indelibly molded his sense of composite, shifting and politically astute identity. When I consider Gamal's concept of his black and Arab identity, I am reminded of Julia Kristeva's cosmopolitan stance that rejects "the cult of origins" and elevates "a transnational or international position situated at the crossing of boundaries."[225] Though Gamal does acknowledge his origins, he considers them significant primarily as instructional tools for raising awareness and building a dialogue. His Egyptianness – even the black-Africanness that he considers his provenance – are not vital components of his identity. He much prefers to conceptualize his identity as a layered, mercurial entity, "situated at the crossing of boundaries."

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[222] Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban. "The Coexistence of Cohorts: Identity and Adaptation among Arab-American Muslims." *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change*. Eds. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 54.
[223] Ibrahim Hayani. "Arabs in Canada: Assimilation or Integration?." *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 284.
[224] Michael W. Suleiman and Baha Abu-Laban. "Introduction." *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change*. Eds. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989).

"Is your identity connected in any way to your Egyptianness; do you identify yourself as an Egyptian?," I asked Gamal. He ruminated at length before settling on an adequate label:

> I guess, I would say, yeah, in a way I do identify as an Egyptian. Maybe more so as I grow older than less so, but I tend to more identify myself as Arab, if that's a category, so…I don't know really why but… I think it's political and it's also a fact that I never really grew up with a lot of Egyptian friends. I guess I've always been attracted to Arab things generally, this sort of broader Arab community or Arab nation I feel a part of…
> I've always been frustrated with the kind of divisions that people made and I never really saw them as being true, in any kind of way… I still do call myself Afro-Arab…[226]

I did not understand the 'Afro' component of Gamal's label so he elucidated:

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[225] Quoted in George Lipsitz. *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place*. (London; New York: Verso, 1994), 24.
[226] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.

> Egyptians have a history of racism like anywhere else towards black folks, Africa, etc, etc., because Egypt is in Africa but it seems as though it wants to believe it's not in Africa…Most Egyptians won't want to see themselves as black…'African' is a political as well as a kind of – what do you want to call it – biological, sort of, identity. My father was a very dark skinned man and he had – whatever you want to call them in anthropological terms – negroid features, so growing up here, he looked a lot like people I saw on TV, African-Americans on TV, especially when he suntanned…and came back pretty dark…My parents… were like a lot of other Egyptians in that they didn't want to be seen black either. And so they would say to me: don't listen to that music because that's black music, don't wear this style of pants because they are black pants, etc, etc, so in a way I think my argument about Egypt is, and I'd probably get in trouble for it is that it's a lot like a lot of slave societies in…, formerly slave societies in the New World, like in the southern part of the United States, series of people all different colors, and so… in that sense I find it hard to identify as an Egyptian in that context because I felt as though… first of all there was a kind of internalized racism where we would talk, growing up in Canada things Egyptian were kind of negative, and that has taken me…that took me a while to get over, but also the Egyptians that I met I found them… I wished two things from them: one was that they recognize their larger Arabness, and two was that they recognize that they were black, that there was an Africanness to them, cultural, historical, political, etc.[227]

Before Gamal could articulate his resistance to the label "Egyptian" and explain the associations he had of the term, he felt the pressure "in terms of how you could express your Egyptianness, what it would look like."

> We were the only ones, it wasn't as though there was a lot of other Egyptians, you could say, a community. I didn't initially want to identify as Egyptian because for me, that meant that I would get harassed at school, I might get into fights… Canadian to me meant the repression of Arabness, of Egyptianness, etc.[228]

Gamal uses his ethnicity and nationality to make a statement, to stimulate debate and broaden people's horizons. When asked why he labels himself Afro-Arab, he responded:

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[227] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.

[228] Ibid.

> I think as an intellectual, as somewhat of an artist, as somebody who plays with language, that is why I call myself Afro-Arab, because then everyone goes, "that's not right, you're not an Egyptian, you're not black." Egypt has a lot in common with South Asians and Iranians, and most of the global conflicts are really about silly divisions, right?…So some days I'm Egyptian, and some days when people say where you from I say I'm from Poland, or Beijing, just to kind of play with people.[229]

Gradually, Gamal became more cognizant of his ethnic and cultural identity and interested in asserting it:

> That started happening when I began high school and then, every year, it increases and increases, because the older I get the more tired I get of having to fit in and having to defend that I am a good Canadian, so in that sense I would like to reclaim, if you will, some things that I didn't admit or disavow, or reject.[230]

Gamal subscribes to the notions of ethnicity as an elastic, malleable, and capacious entity. His definition is akin to the following two. According to Gerd Baumann, "ethnicity is the product of people's actions and identifications, not the product of nature working by itself. This is why ethnicity is not about blood as such or ancestry as such. Rather, it is about the cultivation and refinement of all the possibilities first given by nature, but not finished by nature."[231] George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross observe that "ethnic identity is in essence a past-oriented form of identity, embedded in the cultural heritage of the individual or group."[232] It is, according to them, "developed through time and takes on various meanings in the course of one's life experience, as one contrasts one's social group in some measure against the dominant culture and against other groups within it."[233]

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[229] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Gerd Baumann. *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities*. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 63.
[232] George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross. "Ethnicity: Vessel of Meaning and Emblem of Contrast." *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change*. Eds. George DeVos and Lola Romanucci-Ross. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 363.

Gamal's parents felt a great nostalgia for their pre-emigration life; despite his father's imprisonment by the Nasserist regime for having worked for an American company. Their nostalgia was a longing for the carefully edited and idealized scrapbook of memories of a particular time rather than for the actual Egypt they left behind; "a space in [the] mind, carved out in [their] youth."[234] Gamal says:

> My father was very anti-Egyptian. In many ways, it's a very typical immigrant story: you don't want to be identified with home because you think that they might be able to get you, or they ruin your chances.[235]

The Egyptian traditions cultivated in their home focused on food ("and backgammon," Gamal jests) – an element that permeated into Gamal's generation. When asked: "Do you consciously, or subconsciously, use any symbols, whether material objects, or gestures, or words, anything to assert or express your Egyptianness?" Gamal replied:

> Yeah, I guess so, you know, I'm a big fan of cooking, a lot of it is around food, cooking… Sense of humor, a lot of it works on puns, and you can sort of do it in English, and in Arabic. I tend to do it in English more because of my accent… And dress, more and more.[236]

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[233] George De Vos and Lola Romanucci-Ross. "Ethnicity: Vessel of Meaning and Emblem of Contrast." *Ethnic Identity: Cultural Continuities and Change.* Eds. George DeVos and Lola Romanucci-Ross. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 375.
[234] Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia.* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 275.
[235] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.
[236] Ibid.

Gamal resists the idea of a narrowly defined identity and its associative accoutrements. He says: "I've always been frustrated with the kind of divisions that people made and I never really saw them as being true, in any kind of way…" and considers himself a part of "the broader Arab community or Arab nation."[237] In contrast to Marwa and Mohammed, Gamal does not actively cultivate the Egyptian facet of his identity. Since he is not a part of the collective Egyptian diaspora, the symbols to "reinforce peoples' identification with specific social values" would not elicit the kind of response they would from someone who contributes to the construction of "associated mythologies."[238] Gamal's Egyptian identity exists by the virtue of his birth and lies dormant, occasionally stirred by certain personal rituals such as cooking or listening to music.

Gamal has eclectic musical tastes. He mostly listens to black music from different parts of the world, jazz, West African music, the blues, hip-hop, R&B, soul, etc. "Some days it's not enough for me," he says, "and I need to listen to Hindi music, or some other music…"[239]

But he does listen to Arabic music

> first of all, because it reminds me of my late father who used to love Arabic music. Also, because I find it very evocative and it soothes me, reminds me of (inaudible). I don't have much of a selection of Egyptian music. The sound is the absence of English, that's the one thing. There is the kind of a way in which the note is held and held and held. Farid al-Atrash, for example. It reminds me of old Coptic liturgy, always very soothing for me, and so it's the same kind of sound that comes from the muezzin in the call to prayer. It's

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[237] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.

[238] Brian S. Osborne. "Landscapes, Memory, Monuments, and Commemoration: Putting Identity in its Place." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 33 (2001), 2.

[239] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.

> very warm, very soothing. It kind of takes me out of the English…school. For me, it's mystery. In fact, I don't really understand the words, I don't really listen for them…It's the voice, the music, temporality, the movement from slow to very fast.[240]

In the present and the preceding chapters I have contextualized the interplay of the temporal and the subjective forces of memory by presenting and framing the stories of the Egyptian immigrants. During the course of my fieldwork among the first-generation immigrants, I found that there was a direct link between the two elements: an object or a phenomenon elicited memories of a specific place. Among the second-generation immigrants, in contrast, stimuli conjured up a collage of impressions. That is not to say that the first-generation immigrants did not form complex associations filtered through the prism of their subjectivity. They had the ability to do both. The latter, however, never living 'in exile,' did not have the repository of pre-emigration events to draw from. They did not have the benefit of the collective retrospection, in which a personal memory is reinforced by popular sentiment or rooted in a reality universally accepted as true. Instead, the stimuli of individual retrospection "yield[ed] to consciousness…what consciousness has given them to absorb."[241]

Attempting to determine the extent to which the subjective and objective forces constituting identity influenced the formation and trajectory of one's identity, I have arrived at a rather mundane conclusion. The individual consciousness and his/her social being had a symbiotic relationship. The consciousness influenced individuals' social being and their social being, in turn, influenced their consciousness. Gamal's case aptly illustrates Marx's and Engels's assertion that while individuals do shape their own history, they do so within clearly delineated limits and under established conditions. The accident of one's birth is the first axis around which one's identity revolves. Initially, that identity is imposed from outside. Gamal eschewed the labels centred around the rigid ethnic and national categories, claiming that they were restrictive and ultimately yielded little information about the person. He did, however, have to work within the narrow confines of his own Egyptian nationality and Arab ethnicity. He used his provenance and his dark-complexioned appearance to distort and expand the established ethnic and national definitions. By labelling himself black, African, Arab, Egyptian, Canadian, and in jest, certain slightly improbable categories, he aimed at an individual essence and attempted to transcend the 'socialized being.' Gerd Baumann's definition of ethnicity as "the product of people's actions and identifications, not the product of nature working by itself"[242] reinforces Marx's and Engels' assertion.

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[240] Interview with Gamal Abdel-Shehid, May 26, 2003.
[241] Keith H. Basso. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape." *Senses of Place*. Eds. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso. (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 1996), 56.

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[242] Gerd Baumann. *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities*. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 63. He continues: "This is why ethnicity is not about blood as such or ancestry as such. Rather, it is about the cultivation and refinement of all the possibilities first given by nature, but not finished by nature."

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to explore the dominant processes that informed and reflected immigrant identity, highlighting the role of those that fell beyond the scope of ethnomusicological inquiry. It represents a first stage, a pilot study of sorts, of what I anticipate will be a comprehensive research in this area. By presenting and contextualizing six interviews I conducted with Egyptian immigrants and their children between 2001 and 2003, I revealed immigrant identity as a more nuanced, heterogeneous, and spherical process largely influenced by individual and social determinations unjustly peripheral to the music discourse. Drawing on scholarly and literary texts exploring diasporic experience, I further illuminated the concepts presented in my thesis and situated my discussion within the broader, multi-disciplinary, global framework of immigrant experience.

By drawing on personal accounts of the first-generation Egyptian immigrants and their offspring and the historical, literary and scholarly sources, I aimed to demonstrate that music, though by no means peripheral, was not as prominent a feature and as potent a force in the immigrants' processes of constructing and articulating identity as language or the utalitarian objects and phenomena. I also set out to demonstrate that the immigrant identity was a nuanced and heterogeneous process founded on and influenced by individual and social determinations, many of which, such as ethnicity, cultural ritual, religion, language, everyday objects and souvenirs, or food, fell outside of the scope of musicological inquiry and required an individual treatment.

The ability to maintain distinct ethnocultural identity while participating within the larger cultural framework of the host country is a hallmark of the contemporary immigrant culture. Helmy, Fikry, and Magda all exemplify that model, successfully straddling two realms. They embodied the integrationist model of acculturation[243], whereby they simultaneously inhabited two realms – the home and abroad. The second-generation immigrants used their heritage to assert their uniqueness in the face of the culture of conformity. They epitomized the concept of creolization, moving freely between distinct cultural and linguistic realms, equally at home in each. Having managed to carve out a comfortable social niche as Canadians, they have maintained the distinctions and accoutrements of separate cultural provenance, nationhood, and ethnicity as Egyptians. All negotiated the multiple facets of their identities seamlessly, integrated rather than fully assimilated.

During the course of my fieldwork among the children of the first-generation diaspora, I found that music played no more important role in reflecting or conveying individual or collective identities than did the language (for Marwa and Mohamed) or ethnicity (for Gamal). One notable difference between the first- and the second-generation diaspora is the former's reliance on the material to uphold their identity

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[243] Sharon McIrvin Abu-Laban. "The Coexistence of Cohorts: Identity and Adaptation among Arab-American Muslims." *Arab Americans: Continuity and Change*. Eds. Baha Abu-Laban and Michael W. Suleiman. (Belmont, Mass.: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc., 1989), 60.

(travel to Egypt, collecting souvenirs, wearing Egyptian clothes, reading Arabic books) as contrasted with the latter's tendency to use the immaterial (idealization, memory, stories, history) to assert it.

Symbols and ritual practices encompassing sounds, smells, sights, material objects as well as traditional occasions, religious holidays and rites of passage, are used by immigrants to maintain continuity with certain salient aspects of their 'former' (pre-emigration) identity. Children of the first-generation Egyptian immigrants use these symbols and practices to maintain a connection to the mythical past, to cultivate the illusory continuity (nostalgia by proxy). Their lives are not divided along the lines of 'pre-' and 'post-emigration.' Born and raised in Canada, they do not consider Egypt to be their homeland and they do not have direct recollections associated with it. The nostalgia they feel is "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed."[244] It is "a romance with one's own fantasy."[245] When discussing the second-generation immigrants, Boym's concept of nostalgia as the "superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life,"[246] must be qualified.

In case of Marwa, Mohamed, and Gamal, there is no rupture between the temporal categories of 'home' and 'abroad.' The past becomes a reconstruction – a composite of family lore, recorded history, and myth. The superimposed images, then, are of the real and the imagined, a confluence of the perceived reality and personal elaboration. They constitute an interplay of objects' or phenomena's observable characteristics *and* impressions and meanings generated by the individual's disposition. The nostalgia experienced by the second-generation immigrants, then, is a longing for a certain imagined state, imbued with the immigrants' mosaic of their private notions of 'Egypt,' the impressions they gleaned when visiting their ancestral home, and of their parents' reminiscences. It is longing not so much for a different place or even a different time; it is longing for a state beyond temporality.

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[244] Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xiv.
[245] Ibid, xiv.

Symbolic association invests them with meaning, which then provides a sense of stability and continuity. Andreea Deciu Ritivoi writes that "souvenirs…distinguish and reify experiences, isolate episodes and delineate memories."[247] She observes that nostalgic objects such as "photographs, pressed flowers, gadgets, scrapbooks, or locks of hair – all anticipate and provide material support for a state of mind. They offer a vantage for creating a retrospective story, which not only aspires to record a past event, but also purports to immortalize it."[248]

Baha Abu-Laban draws the distinction between the first and the second generation of immigrants:

> For Arab immigrants to Canada in general, the generational factor is one of the most important influences on cultural identity and assimilation. The gap between the first or immigrant generation and the second and succeeding generations is indeed wide. Members of the latter group have been born, raised, and educated within the context of Canadian culture and institutions.

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[246] Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xiv.
[247] Andreea Deciu Ritivoi. Yesterday's Self: Nostalgia and the Immigrant Identity. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 131.
[248] Ibid, 132.

> They have no past memories of a 'foreign' homeland to glorify and no memories, or regrets for, broken friendship and kinship ties.[249]

Members of the second-generation diaspora employ the above mentioned symbols and practices to cultivate and bolster the Egyptian identity they acquired while living in Canada. Despite their great affection for Egypt, it is not a geographical entity that Marwa and Mohamed long for. Their nostalgia centres on the realm of the symbolic. Just like places can generate their own fields of meaning "through a vigorous conflation of attentive subject and geographical object,"[250] language and material objects have the ability to create resonating sentiment, sense of belonging, and a deep, subjective construction of meaningful experience. Brian Osborne writes:

> Commonly held sets of symbolic meanings about places have often been developed to reinforce peoples' identification with specific social values. Carefully selected because of their emotive power, they are empowered by the careful cultivation of associated mythologies. In this way, the familiar material world becomes loaded with symbolic sites, dates, and events – as well as silences – that provide social continuity, contribute to the collective memory, and establish spatial and temporal reference points for society.[251]

In the case of Marwa and Mohamed, these "sets of symbolic meanings" are composites of idealized notions of Egypt, their parents' nostalgic reminiscences, as well s the "carefully selected" objects and phenomena specific to Egypt such as the climate, architecture, and urban life.

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[249] Baha Abu-Laban. *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1980), 134.

[250] Keith H. Basso. "Wisdom Sits in Places," *Senses of Place*. Eds. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso. (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 1996).

[251] Brian S. Osborne. "Landscapes, Memory, Monuments, and Commemoration: Putting Identity in its Place." *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 33 (2001), 2.

Immigrants maintain the continuity between the past and present by perpetuating their ancestral language, traditions, and religion. Forced to function within the matrix of the new values and customs, they take care to uphold those elements that were instrumental in defining them as individuals pre-emigration. For some immigrants, that takes shape of attending religious services or preparing traditional meals (continuing rituals in exile); for others, reading a poem in the native language or glancing at a souvenir that stimulates associations with a place or a time (symbolic continuity).

During the course of my research, I observed that the nostalgic attachment to particular symbols and patterns constituted an important existential experience of the expatriates. Return to imagined pasts "which are conveniently cleansed of the complexities that accompanied them in the past"[252], to the idealized "organic community of childhood," constituted an integral characteristics of the first-generation immigrants. According to Stuart Hall, we reconstruct "[pasts] more essentially, more homogeneously, more unified, less contradictory than they ever were, once you actually know anything about them."[253] Recreating youth and its world was often motivated by an urgent need to form a foothold for one's own identity in the face of historical and political change as well as in the often doleful reality of immigration.

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[252] Herbert Gans. "Symbolic Ethnicity." *Ethnicity*. Eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 146.

[253] Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities: Old and New Ethnicities." *Culture, Globalization, and World System*. Ed. A. King. (London: Macmillan, 1991), 46.

I also discovered that the immigrant identity was an elastic, adaptable and abundant entity whose diverse aspects became salient in different social contexts. The Egyptians I interviewed used memory in forming their identity, using personal experience from frequent visits to Egypt, placing themselves within the context of Egyptian history, and identifying with the collective experience of diaspora. They transformed and mythologizing their experience, superimposing layers of the subjective onto the objective. I observed that music was by no means peripheral in their processes of structuring and conveying identity, but it did not feature as prominently as language or the everyday objects and phenomena.

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